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WESTERN INDIA

IN 1838.

TODDY TREE.

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WESTERN INDIA

IN 1838.

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BY MRS. POSTANS,

AUTHOR OF "CUTCH."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1839.

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INTRODUCTION.

A WELL known eastern traveller has recorded his opinion, "That it is impossible for an individual, many years resident in India, to write a book fit for the public taste of England; and, moreover, that all Indian customs, et cetera, have become, through the medium of history and romance, so common, that they possess no materials of interest." I cannot by any means agree in this remark. It is true, that different habits of mind, different trains of interest, and the difficulty of remaining "courant de jour" with the

changes in the literary taste of England, may unfit an author, resident in India, from producing a purely imaginative work, of sufficient interest to amuse the reading portion of the English public; but that Indian customs have become by *any* medium common or well known, I unhesitatingly deny.

Of the great and varied beauties of the natural scenery of India, some vague ideas may have been formed; but of its social condition, of its agricultural capabilities, of its vegetable productions, of its geological formations, of its necessities as an empire, or of its value as a colony, little indeed is generally understood; and as it is by recorded facts *alone*, that opinions can be formed, and good arise, it is, I think, to be regretted, that so few among us chronicle our experiences of Indian life. Every individual who visits India, whether his sojourn is for a brief, or a lengthened period;

whether he possess the pen of an accomplished writer, or a more humble talent, that of careful observation, may yet afford some valuable information, if he but faithfully describe all that may have interested or attracted his attention; and this, without any reference to the degree of literary ability which he may possess, inasmuch as facts resemble gems, which although improved by a graceful setting, are yet recognised as jewels of intrinsic worth, even when surrounded by the most rough and unpolished metal.

India is making very rapid advances in general improvement; and although the mass of the people yet unhappily remain sunk in the deepest barbarism, a change is taking place among the gentry, which will produce results of the highest interest.

In the present work, I have endeavoured to sketch the commencement of this change, and to represent some portions of

Western India, as I have seen them; leaving it to the pens of others, more capable for the task, to follow up the work, and by tracing the causes and effects of such a change, to afford a valuable addition to our present knowledge of India, and of the means by which her condition may be efficiently improved.

The gratifying consideration which has attended my recently published work, on "Cutch," will, I trust, be extended to the following pages; which I now venture to present to the reader, in the simple form in which they were originally written; claiming for them, the sole merit of possessing some novel information, which I imagined might prove interesting, and which in some cases, moreover, could only have been afforded, through the medium of a lady's pen.

London, November 1st, 1839.

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WESTERN INDIA

IN 1838.

CHAPTER I.

MODERN BOMBAY.

"So sweet a spot of earth, you might, I ween,
Have guessed some congregation of the Elves,
To sport by summer moons, had shaped it for themselves."

AFTER a protracted residence in the Mofussil, a visitor from an outstation to the Presidency of Bombay is delighted with its beauty, enlivened by its gaiety, and dazzled by the brilliant displays of shops and warehouses, which, on his first arrival from Europe, he had condemned as dusty, dark, and ill plenished. Such in-

pressions are the result of very opposite comparisons; and the newly arrived is, perhaps, as unfair in his expectations as the Jungle Wallah, who, having lost sight of a superior standard of taste, is too readily delighted with everything around him.

Few places have undergone greater change and improvement, than the Presidency of Western India, during the last six years; and if we venture to become prophetic on the present appearance of political affairs connected with the east, its career of progress promises to be even yet more singularly rapid. If the affairs of Sindh, Kandahar, and Caubul, terminate as all such affairs have terminated when British force has been employed, and if the great and splendid object is attained, of navigating the noble Indus, and thus establishing commercial intercourse with the potentates of Upper Asia, Bombay will spring at once into the important position for which late events have so well

prepared her. The work of improvement has been gradually, but surely, progressing, and the tone of society is changed. The native gentry now form a recognised, and important part of the community; their sons are educated to fit them for any mercantile or political appointment, to which they may be called; the English merchants are daily considered as forming a more valuable class. Men of science are organizing branch Societies, which offer every encouragement to enquiry and research; the floating palaces of the merchant kings have been succeeded by vessels efficient, but second-rate in their appointments and accommodation; and the fine Government steamers, with their six weeks news from England, now ride in the harbour, which wanderers of the olden time were glad to make after the dangers and delays of a twelvemonth's voyage.

Without anticipating what may result from our immediate political acts, the pre-

sent rapid communication which exists between Europe and Western India, must render the Presidency of Bombay interesting to many; and I am not aware that since the clever descriptions of Mrs. Graham, much has been said of its internal economy, notwithstanding the change which the power of circumstance has wrought in its general characteristics.

The Harbour scenery of Bombay is justly considered the most lovely in the world, the fairest of all

> "—— the Isles that gem
> Old Ocean's purple diadem."

To detail the particular features which compose its beauty, were impossible. The deep smooth waters, the bright blue cloudless sky, the clustering islands, gleaming in still dreamy indistinctness, fringed with the dark feathers of the palm trees, which seem so jealously to conceal the line where the fair elements unite; the pale purple Ghauts, towering, higher and

higher, in piles of varied form, their lofty summits dim in the misty distance, blending with the soft haze of a tropic sky, form a picture, which fascinates the eye, and spell-binds the imagination, as completely as it baffles the power of language to pourtray.

To afford to those who may not look upon this glorious scene, a bird's-eye glimpse of its general coup d'œil, is all that can be attempted, and the elegant pen of Bishop Heber has well performed that task; objections have been made to his descriptions, as too Italianized and florid, but critics of taste, whom opportunity may have enabled to study the various combinations of pictorial effect among these lovely scenes, must acknowledge, that neither poetry, or painting, can possibly do justice to the peculiar and exquisite beauty of the "Isle of Palms."

Where the inducements which the fair face of nature presents, are so great, it is not remarkable that yachting should be, as

it is, a very favorite recreation; or that the gay streamers of the "Lovely Lucy," and the "Lalla Rookh," should be seen so frequently floating in bright relief against the dark masses of rich foliage which clothe, to the water's edge, the time-hallowed island of Elephanta, and the beautifully wooded scenery of Salsette.

The *modern* town of Bombay, however, (for to such a distinction the march of progress entitles it) deserves description; and however charming may be the bright and sparkling bay, the palm-tasselled islets, the varied craft, and the pretty latteen sails which swell in the fresh breeze, a stranger yet desires to step firmly upon land, and mix in the bustling interests of his fellow-men.

The general appearance of Bombay from the harbour, is certainly not attractive. Little can be seen of it but the walls of the fort, flanking the water's edge, the tents of the esplanade rising in white and gleaming clusters, and the Island of Colabah,

stretching out towards the west, covered with palm trees, and crowned at its extreme end by the Bombay light-house.

The bundahs, or landing-places, are commonly surrounded by singular-looking boats, whose crews ply among the shipping with passengers or cargo. Moored in a busy knot, may be observed the crazy little canoe, laden with cocoa nuts and plantains; the miniature barge, covered with the gay purdah (awning), to screen the fat Parsee, who sits cross-legged in her stern; and the more important bundah boat, with its comfortable cabin lined with soft cushions, and surrounded with smart green Venetians, awaiting an engagement to convey a party to the spot selected for a pic-nic, or to stretch down the coast to the various beautiful and sea-girt stations of the southern Concan.

On landing at either the new Apollo or the Custom-house bundahs, hummalls bearing palankeens, rich in green paint and silken curtains, entreat the custom of the

new arrival; and half-denuded coolies press forward in dozens, to seize upon and convey all such articles of the stranger's worldly goods, as are not formed to subside conveniently on the shelf of the selected palki. If the object of these attentions is a cadet, an individual readily to be distinguished by an experienced eye, some half dozen dirty-looking Mussulmen run along by the open door of the palankeen, crying out, as they vehemently jostle each other, "I master's servant—I get master every thing!" This, if allowed, the selected villain readily does, charging most impudently for the same, robbing his employer by means of accomplices, and leaving him at the particular juncture at which his services are most required.

The first objects which attract attention, are the innumerable piles of tightly screwed cotton bales, which flank the bundah, awaiting exportation, and the ponderous cranes and screws used in their compression. This dusty, noisy, mercantile scene, is

soon, however, exchanged for an attractive view, including a fresh peep of the beautiful bay, with the snowy tents, and pretty bungalows, which adorn the cheerful esplanade.

This fine road, situated parallel to the sea, and receiving its freshest breezes, forms the fashionable Bombay drive, and is thronged every evening by all the pretty women and gay gallants of the island; some displaying their equestrian talents, and the most luxurious reclining in elegant and various equipages, of the best London make. The small Arab steeds which draw these vehicles, appear, to an eye accustomed to our splendid English carriage-horses, deficient in size, ragged, thin, and altogether ill-proportioned; neither is the general effect improved by the singular attire of the coloured menials. The coachmen and grooms wear a coarse cloth dress, of whatever colour may have been selected for the family livery, with a cummerbund, and flat turban, of the form of a plate,

consisting of entwined folds of orange, blue, or crimson broad cloth, adorned with crossed bands of gold or silver lace. This costume, combined with bare legs and native slippers, appears as incongruous a melange of personal decoration as can well be imagined. Separated from the road by a slight wooden railing, is an extensive space covered with short grass. This spot is a favourite lounge for the respectable classes of Jews, Persians, and other graceful looking Asiatics; who, in full and sweeping robes, converse in the language most familiar to them, and criticise the fashionable crowds who recreate on the more dusty road, or occasionally draw off and chat at a military band, which twice during the week forms an additional attraction to the evening exercise.

The roads are so excellent, and the scenery of the island so very beautiful, that it seems matter of surprise that the esplanade should be so constantly favoured; but, unfortunately, the more rural drives,

which lie at the back of the island, can be gained only by the way of crowded, long, and dirty bazaars, seldom passed except on Sundays, when a charming sea-side drive, called the "Breach Candy," is preferred, for the occasion, to the deserted esplanade. In the centre of a crossway, leading from this great prado to the fort, is a fine statue of the Marquis Wellesley, executed by Chantrey; his lordship is placed in the noisiest and busiest spot, and seems to look down with placid dignity on the hundreds of miserable buggies standing here for hire, or the curious little two-wheeled dirzi carts, which their owners leave in this convenient spot, until the conclusion of the day's work affords the opportunity to reclaim them.

Cruickshank would produce an amusing enough volume, illustrative of the varied equipages of Bombay; from the sumptuous barouche of the rich Parsee, to the green and battered buggy, which the English tar, in his best attire, hires to

rattle through the native town, and introduce him to all the toddy stores of the great Bazaar. An hour's drive from the port to the suburbs, will exhibit a curious variety of taste, and entertaining specimens of how readily a worn-out appendage to some great man's state, may be revivified and rendered available to far different uses to those which marked its prime. Then may be seen, the English landau fresh from Long-acre; the smart dennet of the military aspirant, marked by its high cushions and dashing Arab; the roomy buggy of the mercantile Parsee, adorned with green and gold, rattling by with a fast trotting Persian horse, valued according to his speed; the small, unassuming, doubled-bodied phaeton, drawn by a handsomely-mottled Pegue poney; the native shigram or palkee carriage; the richly gilt chariot of a high cast Hindoo, with its silken reins, and emblazoned panels; and last, the humble bullock hackerie, either laden with goods, or

curtained to screen a smiling group of native children.

During the hot season, the Esplanade is adorned with pretty, cool, temporary residences, erected near the sea; their chuppered roofs and rustic porches half concealed by the flowering creepers and luxuriant shrubs, which shade them from the mid-day glare.

These bungalows are situated in line, with spaces between each, at a convenient distance from the road; the material of which they are made is simply bamboo and plaster, lined with strained dungaree,* dyed a pale straw colour; the offices are placed at a short distance from the bungalow; and the whole is enclosed with a pretty compound, filled with fine plants, arranged in tubs, round the trellised verandahs: in this situation the shrubs flourish well, despite their vicinity to the sea, usually considered so inimical to the labours of horticulturists.

* A coarse kind of unbleached cloth.

The expense of erecting a comfortable bungalow varies from about six to eight hundred rupees; at the approach of the monsoon, the occupants of these fragile residences take down and house such of the building materials as may be available for the following season, and retire to more substantial dwellings; these are to be found either within the fort, or at Girgaum, Byculla, Chintz Poogly, and other places beyond the bazaars, where European residents have erected groups of pucka* built, and handsome houses, with excellent gardens and offices attached. The rents of well situated residences of this description are usually very high, and persons of limited means are constrained to retire to smaller dwellings, many of which are scattered about among the cocoa nut woods, at the distance of about four miles from the port; these are considered feverish localities, and

* Built of stone and mortar.

moreover swarm with insects of every description.

It is difficult to imagine any thing more agreeable than a late dinner in an esplanade bungalow, after returning from the evening drive.

The clean smooth China matting which covers the floors; the numerous lamps shedding their equal light from the snowy ceilings; the sweet perfume of the surrounding plants, and the fresh sea breeze, blowing through the trellis-worked verandahs, render them delightful retreats after the heat and lassitude endured throughout the day. Elegance combines with comfort, in making these pretty abodes so truly pleasant; and a fine-toned piano, and a good billiard table, are the usual additions to varied articles of luxury and convenience. The upholsterers and cabinet makers of Bombay are too good workmen to allow any want to be unprovided for, in the decorations of a drawing-room or boudoir. The jackwood in common

use is a good material, resembling mahogany; and the blackwood, when handsomely carved and well polished, is little inferior to dark coloured rose-wood.

It is true, that a very unfurnished effect is produced by the unadorned walls of a drawing-room in India, wall shades being a bad exchange for either handsome paintings, or richly framed mirrors: yet, when the fitness of things is considered, a stranger soon recognises the advantages of cool, well strained dungaree walls, which afford no attraction to the depredating presence of loathsome insects seeking what they may devour.*

The esplanade forms a continual resort

* The white ants are most destructive on the esplanade; trunks are never safe unless placed on frames at some distance from the ground, or elevated on four bottles, driven necks downwards into the soil; but great as are their ravages in a wardrobe, the pillages of these mischievous little animals in a library are yet more to be feared. The most valuable books become dust in their paths; for as it was once facetiously observed, not only do the termes, like

for all classes of itinerant merchants, who travel from tent to bungalow, and from bungalow to tent, finding many well disposed to trifle away an hour in turning over their goods; and among them many visitors from the Mofussil, who are so dazzled by the novel display, as to become ready and advantageous purchasers.

The Borahs rank first among this class, and daily may be encountered on the same rounds; the Banian master, arrayed in red turban and snowy vest, bearing his well varnished *chitree*, or Chinese umbrella, and followed by a group of three or more coolies, bearing tin cases, or circular baskets, covered with coarse blankets to protect the enclosed goods. Some of these are cloth merchants, stored with coloured muslins, chintzs, and jaconet, "all new fashion, lady;" others abound in plated, silver, and Sheffield ware, of the com-

common book worms, skip through a work, but devour and digest it, and in so doing, as good critics, pull it speedily to pieces.

monest workmanship, accompanied, perhaps, by a pair of worn-out pistols, or a good-for-nothing dressing case; and the lowest order carry about baskets full of *chow chow*, as it is called, being a melange of bridles, pickles, lavender water, Seidlitz, bonbons, and curry-combs, with a few second-hand blankets, and a piece or two of damaged trowsering.

Next in order, are the stone merchants of Ceylon, Cambay or Surat, with a pocket-book bursting with certificates for respectability and just dealing, and a casket full of cornelians, jaspars, blood-stones, and inferior gems. A vender of fruit succeeds the superior trader, bearing the fine black grapes of the Deckan; and others laden with shaddocks, pine apples, and Aurungabad oranges—the last an inferior fruit, having a thick peel and little juice. The shaddock of Bombay, or, as it is usually called, the *Pumellow*, is unrivalled in Western India for size, juiciness, and refreshing flavour; for, like the mangoe, the

shaddock only flourishes in perfection in the soil and climate of the Presidency. The Meiwa Waller, or fruitseller, has scarcely left the tent, before an oilman craves admission, laden with cheeses, pickles, vinegar, and rotten hams; all these gentry in turn, demand six times what they will eventually rejoice to gain; and it requires considerable judgment to select anything of a really good and useful kind.

A poor Borah is at present in Bombay, whose stock in trade simply consists of a few pins, needles, knives, and tapes. He has been totally blind from his youth, yet walks in safety through the most crowded bazaars, and the most secluded bye streets of the fort. Some benevolent person has taught him a little English; and nature, in depriving him of one sense, has been so prodigal in her grants of others, that he seems almost unconscious of his sad affliction. His goods are all wrapt in separate papers, and stored carefully in a little box; on an-

application being made for a particular article, the blind merchant immediately seeks, unrolls, and presents it. If an objection is made to its size or quality, a second is instantly produced, free from the alleged imperfection; like a keen chapman, he points out the uses and beauties of his wares, and being well known in Bombay, his affliction has gained him many friends.

The Fort is divided from the esplanade by a moat, crossed by bridges leading through its principal gates. The houses which face the walls, are lofty and handsome, having wide verandahs on the first floor, broad staircases, and spacious apartments. The streets are close, dusty, and narrow; and the eaves of the houses project over them, to the exclusion of all breeze, or general circulation of air. Nothing can well be imagined more fatiguing than a shopping excursion to the fort, particularly if a palankeen be the chosen vehicle; from this, no Kuskus Tattee, how-

ever well watered, can exclude the burning and oppressive heat. *

The Fort contains three of those attractive places known as ruination shops; they are filled with very a tolerable collection of haberdashery, which is replenished on the arrival of any French or English ships. The stock is secured in glass cases, and the prices are enormous, long credit being required; and the goods disposed of being expected to remunerate the dealer for such as are destroyed by climate or bad packing. A yard of gauze ribbon is charged at half a rupee; and silks worth about three shillings in Europe, are disposed of readily at eight. Like the Borahs, however, these tradesmen make great reduction in the price first demanded; this custom is universal, for I imagine a native never existed, who understood the conve-

* It is customary to place a mat of this sweet-scented grass over the top of a palankeen; it is watered by the bearers, and the coolness and evaporation is most grateful.

nience or respectability of a prix fixè. Both plain and figured China silks are to be obtained at a low price, of very beautiful colour and fine texture; but it is not considered good taste to appear in any but those of European manufacture.

In addition to the mercers, the fort contains two good chymists, two booksellers, a musical circulating library, and an English jeweller's. The Parsee shops, or *Ducahns*, are innumerable. The best is kept by Jangerjee Nasserawanjee, who vends goods of all descriptions, from purple velvet to raspberry jam. A sketch of this particular store may afford an idea of such repositories in general; the goods on sale being similar at all, varying, of course, in quantity and quality, according to the wealth of the dealer.

On either side of Jangerjee's open door, are fixed benches, where may usually be seen, couchant, a pair of fat Parsees, the trader and his accountant. The shop is large and dark; the walls surrounded with

glass cases, filled with fine French china, bijouterie, gold lace, sauces, brandied fruits, riding whips, and other European superfluities. A central avenue is flanked with cases containing jewellery, French clocks, and all descriptions of nicknackery. On the floor have subsided Cheshire and Gruyêre cheeses, hams, cases of sardines, salmon, and other edibles; and from the ceiling depend bird cages, lamps, and coloured French lithographs, in handsome frames. Large *go-downs*, or store rooms, are attached to the premises, containing beer, wine, brandy, and liqueurs of all qualities, with mess supplies of every description.

Such is a Parsee shop; and it is unnecessary to say, that immense fortunes are realized by the owners, the profits on the goods being regulated by rules quite opposed to all principles of fair dealing. It is moreover customary for a Parsee shopkeeper, on making out a bill which has remained long unpaid, to add a sum as in-

terest on the amount of the whole; this, however, the Court of Requests neither acknowledge or protect, unless an agreement is proved, by which the debtor consented to such a charge on his purchase of the goods. If a Parsee trader purchases goods from a private individual, and immediate payment is required, the wily purchaser deducts a certain per centage for "ready money;" in short, daily experience will assure every person who has any mercantile transactions with this class of traders, that there are no people more keenly alive to, or better acquainted with the various channels by which capital may be accumulated, than the Parsee shopkeepers of Bombay.

Auctions in the fort are of daily occurrence, and damaged goods of every description are sold for a mere trifle, the principal bidders being Borahs, whose baskets are replenished by this means. Horses and carriages are frequently disposed of in the same way, and fall into the hands of

Parsees, who resell them with infinite advantage.

Within the Fort are two large bazaars; the China bazaar, as it is called, being one, and the Thieves' bazaar, the other. The first contains all sorts of curiosities, with store rooms full of China satins and tea boxes; the second is crowded with warehouses, filled with European articles, to be disposed of at a small profit. Many of these premises are far more extensive than the Parsee shops; and superb dinner and breakfast services, glass ware, and table supplies are to be purchased at little more than prime cost.

It is pleasant from these narrow, crowded and dusty ways, to emerge on the Bombay *green*, a spacious area, surrounded by public offices. On an enclosed portion stands a fine statue of the Marquis Cornwallis, protected by arches of masonry, and surmounting a suitable inscription; around the rails stand numerous palankeens, the bearers sleeping

beneath their shade, or engaged in netting, or winding thread.

The town hall, library, and council chambers, which ornament, in one fine building, the side of this green; are well worthy attention; and with the exception of the British Museum, and the Bibliothèque du Roi, are not inferior to any of the same description. The library contains a varied and large collection of standard and modern works; and a museum seems only now required, to render the institution one of great and encreasing value. A vestibule at the end of the grand staircase, is adorned with a fine statue of Sir John Malcolm, by Mr. Chantrey; and another of Mr. Elphinstone, by the same artist, graces a spacious hall, set apart for public meetings. It was originally suggested that this superb apartment should be casually used for holding subscription balls; but it proved that the expenses of lighting would absorb too large a proportion of the allotted means.

Business is never commenced, either in the shops or offices of the Fort, until eleven o'clock; before this period the roads are watered, and individuals of all classes, in all varieties of demi-toilette, and by all sorts of means, take their constitutionals, retiring about eight, when the Bombay sun becomes intolerable, and continues so during the oppressive lull which precedes the setting-in of the sea breeze. Complaints are common, of the sun producing more acute and sudden headache by exposure to it at all times in the Presidency than at outstations; but it is difficult to account for this peculiarity of effect, while a fine sea breeze is felt on every side; and the constant watering of the roads would seem to cause an agreeable coolness, by means of rapid evaporation. The establishment of an efficient police force is one of the great modern improvements of the Presidency. Puggees * are still retained

* A *Puggee* is one of a band of thieves, who engages at a certain salary to secure his employer from

for the protection of property; but the highways and bazaars are now orderly and quiet, and robberies much less frequent. The dress of the men is a dark blue coat, with a black belt, and yellow turban; they are a respectable, well-conducted body, on all occasions civil and obliging, where their services are required.

Pomflets and rice at ten o'clock, form the usual Bombay breakfast; after which visiting commences, and continues until one, when the tiffin, and the siesta (its supposed successor) renders every house sacred from foreign intrusion. The dinner tables are now admirably supplied; hecatombs of slaughtered animals have

robbery or loss. These watchmen receive about fourteen shillings a month; and for this, prowl about the compound, and round the bungalow, during the night, coughing, and roaring at intervals, to warn any predatory stragglers of their presence and engagement. If, under this arrangement, a robbery is committed, the Puggee stands pledged either to produce the thieves, or make good the loss sustained.

given place to lighter delicacies; and there are few European luxuries, which may not now be placed on the convivial board. Perigord pies, preserved meats, English vegetables, and choice wines, are all procurable, and appear constantly at the tables of regular dinner-givers—a large class in the Presidency, where great hospitality still prevails in families whose allowances permit the necessary expenditure. The markets are well supplied; the mutton, beef, and veal of good quality; and the poultry, usually brought from the Portuguese settlement of Goa, is of a very superior kind, and may be purchased from itinerant dealers at a low price; fine ducks are sold at six shillings a dozen, and turkeys at an equally moderate charge. The oysters and prawns are excellent, and the delicate highly-flavoured pomflet is unrivalled; this fish, in form, resembles a small turbot, and is justly held at a high estimate by all bon vivants; it is occasionally caught by the fishermen on the Kat-

tiàwar coast, and other places, but inferior in size and quality, Bombay being preëminently distinguished for its pomflets, its shaddock, and its mangoes.

The island of Colabah is a pretty, retired spot, whose dulness is redeemed by the health-inspiring breezes, which play around its shores; a good road runs to its extreme end, on which stands the light-house, and the lunatic asylum. The Queen's sixth regiment is at present stationed there, and many families reside on the island, who prefer such quiet to the gaieties of the sister land. In truth, until late improvements were considered necessary, few residences could be so inconvenient for any, but the very quiet, as Angria's Colabah; a rocky sort of way, about a mile in length, connected this tongue of land with Bombay; which at high tide was covered by the rolling flood. Many have been the luckless wights, who, returning from a festive meeting, heedless of Neptune's certain visit, have found the

curling waves beating over their homeward path, compelling them to seek again the "banquet hall deserted," and beg a shake-down at the quarters of their host. The more impetuous have sought to swim their horses across this dangerous pass, and lives have been lost in the attempt. This inconvenience, so severely felt, led at length to the erection of a solid and handsome valade, with a foot-path protecting the elevated and level road.

Bombay is not a favourite military station: young men grumble wofully at their heavy duty, and the lack of independence and freedom experienced after the easy routine of an outstation. Hunting, and shooting, pic-nics, and out-of-door deshabille, must be necessarily abandoned at the Presidency, and replaced by full-dress, fort guards, parades, reviews, and "all the pomp and circumstance" of service, together with morning calls upon the ladies, the ultima thule of misery to every subaltern accustomed to take his ease in the Mofussil.

Bombay is deficient in places of public amusement; the Theatre, which, in the zenith of its attractions, was never well-conducted, has lately been sold, and there are neither fancy fairs, or concerts, to dissipate ennui, or afford matter for fashionable chitchat. A good racket court, and billiard rooms, afford casual recreation to the gentlemen, but there is little to offer entertainment to society in general. The races, which take place in January, cause considerable excitement to lovers of the turf. The course is kept in good order, and the clubhouse, the wide verandah of which forms the stand, is crowded on the occasion; gloves are lost and won, and bright eyes welcome the owners of the favourite horses, as anxiously as they might at Ascot; but the race itself can only be of interest to those, who either own horses or have heavy bets depending. Some gentlemen prefer riding their own race to trusting native jockeys, who, however well they may be able to train, certainly cannot

ride. The *Chiffney* of Western India, a Mahommedan called Suffur-oo-deen, might, however, when arrayed in his racing gear, be mistaken for an English jockey; but he has no rival in his calling, and is as well known to the Indian racing-world as the celebrated "Goblin Grey," * whom he so often brought triumphantly to the winning post. Large fortunes have been scattered in India, as elsewere, by the mania for this species of gambling, which has produced the additional evil of increasing the value of horses, the Arab dealers well knowing they can procure almost any price for a promising colt, as the racing season approaches.

At certain periods of the year, parties of Arabs establish themselves in a sort of gipsey encampment near the race course, bringing horses and grey-hounds for sale. These wandering traders form wild and

* The "Goblin," was a celebrated and beautiful racer, long the property of Major Morris, an officer well known upon the turf.

picturesque groups, whose attire, filthy as it is, presents a tasteful contrast of well-assorted colours; a dark fawn Aàba, * with crimson borderings, frequently covers a vest of pale blue, and a high scarlet cap surmounts a crowd of shaggy locks, which fall in tangled luxuriance on either side of their deeply bronzed countenances, descending nearly to the girdle.

Every family visiting Bombay, must feel the great inconvenience of there being neither a hotel, or other place of public accommodation, at which they can put up, in the event of their not possessing an acquaintance, whose hospitality they may venture to claim; and this position, however awkward and perplexing, is one in which individuals are very commonly placed, who have long been residents at a distance from the Presidency. The Victoria Hotel solicits the patronage of travellers; but, as it is situated in the very

* A loose Arab cloak, woven from goat's hair.

dirtiest and very narrowest street of the fort, the additional annoyances of flights of mosquitoes, a billiard table, a coffee and a tap room, place it without the pale of respectable support. The Sanitarium affords shelter to invalids, and is delightfully situated, where the smooth sands and fine sea-breeze render it a tempting locality for the convalescent; but the rooms are far too small for family accommodation. In this dilemma, visitors usually pitch tents on the esplanade; and if in the hot season, cause them to be *chuppered in*, as the phrase is, or a false roof erected with bamboos and date leaves, to secure them equally from the intense heat of the mid-day sun, and the evil effects of the evening dews.

Two episcopal, and one presbyterian church, is the ecclesiastical establishment in Bombay. The last is a neat building, possessing a very sweet-toned organ, to whose instrumental excellencies the player does full justice. St. Thomas's church, or

as it would be more properly styled, the cathedral, is chaste and beautiful in design, and the humbler spire has given place to a Gothic tower, which, although at present incomplete, promises to be highly ornamental. During all seasons, morning service is performed at eleven o'clock ; but although large, snowy, and well frilled punkahs wave over the seats, the atmosphere is frequently oppressive, and induces the congregation, generally, to regret the more agreeable custom which obtains at out-stations, where, during the hot months, divine service is performed at sun-rise.

It is difficult to select and particularize, where so many beautiful views, so many fresh combinations of scenery, attract the eye, as from the curving and numerous roads winding about this lovely island; amongst the most charming spots, however, is the bold promontory, known as Malabar Point, and crowned with a mansion, originally the residence of Sir John Malcolm, now set apart for the accommo-

dation of the Governor, when the heat becomes oppressive at Pareil. This agreeable resort, pitched upon the tall and rocky headland, like an eiry above the waves, commands a varied and extensive view, lovely at all times, but more peculiarly so when the sun's broad golden disc is half obscured below the azure waters, and the feathery tips of the cocoa-nut woods retain their amber-tinted hues. Then appear the undulating and varied roads, studded with groups of animated figures; the bright bay, bearing numerous pleasure boats, whose oars lie on the glassy medium which reflects the tasselled palms fringing its immediate shores; inland, the wooded knolls look richer as the foliage takes a deeper hue, the bamboos lose their paly green, and the jutting rocks borrow partial shades from the gathering twilight; while below, along the shores, fires brightly burning, mark the funeral pyres of the Hindoo dead; and far from these, solitary figures, in white and flowing rai-

ment, bend their foreheads to the earth, or slowly pace the strand, to catch the gorgeous sun's last ray upon the wave, and "Hail their Creator's dwelling-place among the living lights of heaven."

Parell, the usual residence of the Governor, is distant about five miles from the fort. The house, originally a fine Catholic monastery, built by the first Portuguese settlers, contains spacious and handsome reception rooms, decorated with richness and taste; the grounds are extensive, and the approach is by a broad avenue, flanked with luxuriant trees, and terminated by substantial lodges. Public breakfasts are given twice a week, when all who may have business with the Governor, attend; and if the Bombay society is fortunate enough to have a lady-president, to give the necessary tone to the drawing-room circle, visits are paid between the hours of eleven and two, on days advertized for reception. Evening parties usually include all the civil and military society in the island; but

on her Majesty's birth-day, a public fête allows a wider range of invitation, and amusing characters mix in the motley crowd, who are seldom seen elsewhere, and never here, at more exclusive seasons. On this occasion, in addition to the usual ball and supper, the gardens are brilliantly illuminated with coloured and Chinese lamps, and the most ingenious and beautifully manufactured fireworks of the celestial empire add their dazzling attractions to the gay and festive scene.

The Horticultural Society's gardens are pleasantly situated at a short distance from Parell. The site was originally paddy-ground, which was cleared, drained, and levelled, at considerable expense; but there is scarcely sufficient interest yet shown in the Society's objects, to ensure them the support required. The great utility of a nursery, which would introduce to the provinces the culture and growth of trees bearing fruits and berries eminently calculated to afford nutritive food of a whole-

some and varied nature to the poorer classes, is indisputable; but public spirit, and the union of effort, is wanting, by which only it could be rendered valuable. Among other stumbling blocks in the way of progression, the Society are at present without an efficient gardener, a really scientific horticulturist not caring to undertake that, which in its present stage would be deemed an insignificant and trifling charge.

Among many rare and curious plants collected by the Society, is the "Traveller's Palm," mentioned by Capt. Basil Hall. Varieties of the cochineal insect, lately transferred from the Brazils, seem to find their position on some fine cactus plants eminently congenial, and promise well for the future improvement of the Indian dyes.

One of the most singular places in Bombay, as a native Institution, is the "Pingera Pool," or Asylum for aged and diseased animals. The building, which is admirably adapted for its uses, was erected

by a Purvoe in the office of Messrs. Forbes and Co., who had amassed considerable wealth with the object of devoting it to charitable purposes. The exterior presents the appearance of a large and handsome gateway, leading into three courts, each surrounded with a shed for the accommodation of the animals. In these, under the care of proper attendants, are arranged sick dogs, horses, cows, and other pensioned quadrupeds of the Institution. All are well fed, and suitably lodged according to their several habits. The horses have convenient stalls, with heel-ropes and nose-bags to each, and all the appurtenances of a well-kept stable; while the cows are permitted to range at large, in a spacious court, strewn with fresh fodder. In cases of disease, medical treatment is never resorted to, but when a poor creature becomes sick unto death, it is heaped over with dry grass, and suffered to expire in peace. The Animal Asylum is supported by large donations

from the rich Jains of the Presidency, and the voluntary contributions of visitors. So anxious are the Banians to protect animals from supposed ill treatment, that a reward is offered of half a rupee for every dog brought to the Pingera Pool, and a proportionate sum for larger animals.

This system is complained of as encouraging dog stealing to a considerable extent; but as no charitable object ever can exist free from contingent abuse, the merciful protection afforded by the Animal Asylum, and its effects on the disposition of its supporters, may be supposed to justify this peculiar application of Jain benevolence.

Bombay is, all in all, a cheerful, agreeable, and lovely spot; not possessing the luxuries of Calcutta, its climate fortunately renders the inhabitants far more independent of them. As European shopkeepers are induced to speculate, in rivalry of the Parsee traders, the Pre-

sidency will lose even the few inconveniences which now attach to it as a residence; and as I before observed, even within six years material alterations have occurred to un-Indianize (if I may be allowed the term) the social condition of Bombay. The present rapid communication with Europe has introduced a very superior class of ideas and interests; and among other advantages, are many of a literary kind—reviews, papers, periodicals, and books, arrive before their novelty is dimmed in Europe; thus all intelligence of interest is discussed, and every means of gaining information easily acquired.

General topics of policy or news, warm conversation, made up before of far less worthy matter; and the arts and graces of life no longer fade, for want of material to renew their charms. The new music of an opera may be procured before its first season is past; and the ladies of the Presidency can appear as fashionably attired during the evening drive on the

esplanade, as a Parisian belle, lolling in her elegant britska, on the Champs Elysées.

The advantages of rapid communication between Europe and Asia do not, however, end, by merely affording with readiness the means and appliances for gratifying private tastes, or presenting materials for agreeable converse. They awaken that powerful, necessary, and mutual interest between the countries, which the enormous distance which separated them by the olden track, seemed to render hopeless. Our men of science in the east, may now be speedily assisted and encouraged in their labours from home ; and the savans of Europe be instructed and delighted with discoveries, the necessary energies required for which being excited and strengthened by a ready correspondence with the learned communities of Europe. Our Indian branch societies are thus nourished and protected by the parent roots ; without whose support they must long have languished in their original

weakling condition. Our local press is daily becoming more respectable and more important. The native society is elevating itself by means of newly acquired intelligence, to a point which must soon lead to the desirable object of mutual appreciation, between European and native talent; and a desire on the part of the most intelligent among the people, that their sons should obtain, by means of an English education, similar information to that which, through the medium of unreserved intercourse with us, they discover we possess.

The groundwork for so desirable a superstructure as the perfect civilization of the native gentry, is already laid, by the college and schools which have lately been so warmly protected by the general society of Bombay; but as these interesting institutions are so intimately connected with the present acquirements and progress of the most influential classes, I shall reserve an account of them for an exclusive chapter.

CHAPTER II.

ELPHINSTONE COLLEGE, AND NATIVE EDUCATION SOCIETY'S SCHOOLS.

"Learning is but an adjunct to ourselves,
And where we are, our learning likewise is."
LOVE'S LABOUR LOST.

These institutions are at present the great fountains from which it may be expected that the blessings of education will flow for the people of Western India. Both are yet in an infant state, more particularly so the college, as its progress and objects have been impeded by an internal schism tending materially to interrupt the circulation of its benefits. The history of this division may be readily explained. Two gentlemen, highly qualified, were attached

as professors to the Institution; and two individuals possessing very considerable merit as teachers, were appointed to the schools, for the purposes of qualifying pupils for the college classes. It appears, however, not to have suited the views of these latter gentlemen to remain subordinate to the superior institution; neither did it agree with the arrangements of the college, to admit an increased number of professors; the result has been, a separation of the interests of the institutions, and a suggestion of the necessity of a junior college school, which, originating under the auspices of the professors, (Messrs. Orlebar and Harkness) was committed to the charge of a learned Brahmin, a modest and highly gifted individual, accustomed to education, and quite capable of filling this responsible position. Small in person, diffident and unpretending in manner, Bal-Shastree is yet no ordinary man, having already proved himself the possessor of talents, themselves sufficient

qualification for his being at various times the tutor of a Prince, and the conductor of a branch of one of the most useful Institutions which ever emanated from active and well directed benevolence.*

The college pupils having been thus placed in the charge of Bal-Shastree, the seceding teachers laboured vigorously in their own vineyard, the college classes remaining unformed, until the energies of the institution shall be required for the pupils of the junior schools, now under the tuition of the intelligent Bal-Shastree. In the classifications of the college studies, mathematics and physics comprise the first class; and moral philosophy and literature the second; neither branch of these sciences, however, has yet been systematically taught, which may be accounted for by the circumstances already noticed.

The Native Education Society's Schools

* Bal-Shastree, a native of Rutnagherry, in the Southern Concan, was chosen tutor to the Rajah of Ukulcote, previous to his appointment to the School.

are situated near the great bazaars, at the extreme end of the esplanade. Committees and examinations are held in the library, a splendid apartment fitted with a good collection of useful works, with globes, maps, and papers, and adorned at either end with full length portraits of the great benefactors of the institution, Sir John Malcolm, and the Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone. The last is the work of Sir Thomas Lawrence, and one of those startling and wonderful likenesses, which gained for the magic pencil of the elegant, yet truth-telling artist, its immortality of fame. There is, moreover, an exquisite touch of oriental landscape in the background, to which the eye is agreeably referred, after a full contemplation of the principal subject of the painting; beautifully coloured, the tall minarets seem brightly reflected in the placid waters stealing round the sacred fanes which the artist has chosen for his subject; while the figure of Mr. Elphinstone, seated in a library chair, is animated by a coun-

tenance beaming with intelligent benevolence. To a fanciful spectator, this fine portrait might suggest numerous reflections on the history of the great and noble-minded man, who, amidst the pomp and circumstance of eastern greatness, devoted his best energies to the promotion of the happiness of those he governed; valuing power as it afforded means for the exercise of his enlightened philanthropy.

The number of boys admitted to the Society's schools, is about four hundred; with fifteen hundred in branch and infant schools, connected with the institution; the only qualification for admission, being a knowledge by the applicant of the vernacular dialect. Eighteen scholarships, endowed by Lord Clare, and Sir Edward West, are in the gift of the society; the lads who enjoy these distinctions, are allowed a grant of ten rupees a month; but at the expiration of three years it ceases, although clever boys are frequently retained as monitors after that period, and their services rewarded with

good salaries. The regulations require that four endowed scholars should leave the school annually, when two fresh candidates are admitted. Pupils from the schools of Dharwar and Poonah are eligible for scholarships, but applications for them are not frequently made.

After public examinations, prizes are annually adjudged to the best scholars; these consist of two gold medals, with handsome chains attached; and six, bearing a similar device in silver. The gold medals, which are intrinsically valuable, are usually awarded to proficients in the mathematical classes. Modern times having rendered the elements of knowledge, comparatively speaking, very easy of acquirement, it was still with unmixed surprise that I first witnessed the kind and degree of information possessed by the students of the school. In accepting an invitation to attend a private examination of the scholars, I expected the display of some tolerable acquaintance with the English lan-

guage, and the simple rudiments of education; I was wholly unprepared, therefore, for the scene which awaited me. The ancient learning for which India was once so celebrated, seemed about to be renewed; and the graceful and intelligent youths around us, destined to prove the restorers of arts and wisdom, such as in ancient days illumined the archives of this long neglected land, which once

> "Shone amongst the nations of the world,
> ——————and will again."

There can remain but little doubt, that in the early epochs of Indian history, seminaries and colleges existed for the education of youth. The Viharas of the Buddhists were probably connected with such objects; and the Brahmins of Central India were doubtless the supporters of such preparatory measures as were required to train the younger members of the priestly caste in the paths of learning, at that period untrodden but by the exclu-

sive few. The lads who now form classes in the Society's schools, are many of them Brahmins by caste; the descendants of men, whose tenets, religious and moral, formed the very acme of intolerance, and who would have been considered polluted for days, had the mere shadow of an European fallen across their path. Yet now, a Brahmin youth, still wearing the triple cord, his garments of a fashion similar to those worn by his forefathers some centuries since, stands with folded arms and eyes, sparkling with all the eagerness of newly awakened curiosity, to receive instruction from his European master, and become initiated into those mysteries of science of which his fathers dreamt not.

Such changes in human feeling, all working to a particular end, as inevitable as the progress of time itself, are curious and attractive to the intelligent observer, and few places could afford higher gratification to such, than the examination rooms of the Society's schools.

A short period since, I was present at a private examination of the pupils of the school, in the presence of the masters, Mr. Bell and Mr. Henderson. This proved a peculiarly interesting exhibition of the power and rapidity with which education can mould the human mind to comprehend and digest the most abstruse physical and moral truths. The lads examined, varied in age, from seven to twenty; the classes being principally composed of Hindoo and Parsee students, including a few Portuguese boys, but not one Mahommedan, the Moslems being unawakened to the advantages of cultivation. Strict rules exist in the institution respecting the rank of the students, the sons of tradesmen being inadmissible, or any below the caste of a Purvoe, or writer. Half castes are equally excluded, the objection in this case being to the inferred "out caste" condition of the mother. It is impossible to consider this exclusive system as other than an evil in an institution which should

be generally beneficial to all classes; but I was assured, that unless such restrictions existed, the wealthy and influential would withdraw their sons from a scene which they could only consider as one of the most degrading pollution. The wisdom of men educated in these schools, will probably, however, induce a change in the prejudices of the native aristocrats, and their posterity may be less anxious to exclude their fellow-men from the advantages, of which they have in their own case so largely participated.

The subject of the first examination was English History, conducted by Mr. Henderson; the questions on the most minute incidents were answered with ease and readiness, Lardner's work being selected for reference, with which the students seemed perfectly conversant! A son of a rich Parsee, (Dadabhoy Pestonjee) rendered himself conspicuous by the information he possessed; a scholarship had been the reward of his diligence; but the

attendant emolument had been declined, Pestonjee having largely contributed to the funds of the Institution.

The second examination was in mental arithmetic; and to an acute observer of the effects of character and education, in developing peculiar varieties of physiognomy, few occupations would have proved more interesting, than the endeavour to trace the bent of minds in this strong mental exercise, and to watch the knitting brows and working muscles of the animated countenances which beamed around us. A little lad of seven years of age, with an overhanging forehead, and small sparkling eyes, peculiarly attracted our attention; the moment a question was proposed to the class, he quickly took a step before the rest, contracted his brows in deep and anxious thought, and with parted lips and finger eagerly uplifted towards the master, silently, but rapidly worked his problem in a manner peculiar to himself, and blurted out the solution with a startling

haste, half painful, half ludicrous. The little fellow seemed wholly animated with the desire of excelling, and his mental capabilities promised him a rich reward. By birth he was a Parsee, and it is remarked that even at an early age lads of this class display a capacity for calculation, and mercantile pursuits, which accompany them through life. It is certainly true, that this part of the native community value information only as it leads to emolument, and being wholly destitute of taste, esteem the most such description of knowledge as may be rendered available in the counting-house.

The third examination was on the six first books of Euclid, including plane trigonometry. In this the Hindoo lads were distinguished for the correctness of their demonstrations; and I was informed, that in all descriptions of abstract, or exact science, the Hindoo students display an aptitude far superior to any other class. Correct translations of Euclid have been

rendered into the Mahratta language; but the lads demonstrating in the school, read and speak English fluently.

It was interesting to observe the good feeling which appeared to exist among the scholars. It was impossible to discover any jealous expression, when another took the highest position in a class; on the contrary, every eye beamed satisfaction when the truth had been discovered by any, and all seemed equally and sincerely gratified, at the praises bestowed on the correct demonstration. After the hours of study have elapsed, the lads throw an arm round each others' necks and pace the room, conversing on the subjects of their studies, and the progress made in their acquaintance with English literature.

This energetic desire for improvement is highly encouraging to the masters, and affords proof that the natives of India cannot be by nature a mentally indolent race, however condemned by circumstances to leave unexercised their higher

faculties, and seek recreations of a merely sensual order. Mathematics is undoubtedly the most valuable science to which the native youth could be attracted, inasmuch as it is that most eminently calculated to prepare and educate the judgment, for weighing and appreciating the facts with which physiology and physic will assay to bear down the ramparts of prejudice, which have stood the attacks of time, and rendered null every attempt to innovate or change.

A Medical College is about to be established in Bombay, which will indeed prove a magnificent and well chosen monument to the memory of the amiable man, whose anxiety to advance the best interests of the natives of India it is designed to commemorate. * At present, anatomical demonstrations frequently attract the students of the schools, to attend

* Our late much esteemed Governor of Bombay, Sir Robert Grant.

lectures at the Native Dispensary; and this fact announces the greatest conquest which, perhaps, has ever been made over the power of prejudice among a people, accustomed to shrink with horror at the mere idea of collision with the dead. A Hindoo lad of singular talent lectures in the schools on chemistry, and illustrates his facts with experiments calculated to prove eminently attractive.

Objections are frequently made to the description of studies pursued in the schools; general opinion seeming to support the idea, that abstract learning might be well exchanged for information of a more practical and useful kind. These objections would seem more important, but for the existence of the infant branches of the Institution, where reading, writing, and the common rules of arithmetic are taught, together with the vernacular dialects, and the rudiments of the English language.

The aim of education must be to civilize, and through the medium of civiliza-

tion, to *Christianize* the natives of India. If so, the first object would seem to be, to prepare the mental faculties of the students to judge and reason of such facts as a knowledge of the various branches of natural science will place under their consideration. The pupils of the Society's schools are members of the native aristocracy; were they tradesmen or artizans, the features of the case would alter; but these are the lads who, endowed with wealth and influence, in after years may effect much by example and opinion over all the classes, who form the general native community of Western India.

Many amiable and excellent persons also desire that the Scriptures should be made a considerable study in the schools, with a view of introducing a knowledge of their truths and a conviction of their value. To this the natives object with a very mild and rational argument; "We," say they, "make no effort to introduce our bedas and puranas; why, therefore, do you urge the

study of your holy books?—let this matter alone, make us as learned as yourselves, but do not seek to instruct our youth to despise the religion of their ancestors."

There is little doubt, but that the present generation of these educated natives will become deists; but having taken one step away from the altars of Paganism, we may hope that their posterity, having no prejudices of priestcraft to combat, may arrive, assisted by a higher influence, at the fair truths of our Christian faith.

The branch schools are worthy of remark, as they form one of the most important parts of the Institution. The rooms devoted to this purpose are large and commodious, and are situated immediately below the apartments occupied by the advanced classes. On entering, we saw not less than three hundred grave-looking little fellows, from four to ten years of age, each seated cross-legged upon his carpet, with huge tomes resting on their knees, which they conned with the deepest attention.

Among these volumes, were several English works, translated into the vernacular dialects; Grant Duff's History of the Mahrattas, and Murray's Grammar, rendered into Mahratta by Bal-Strastree, seemed in most general use. A little lad, attired in a rich turban and cummerbund, and who grasped in his tiny arms a volume nearly as tall as himself, attracted my attention; and, at our request, and without a symptom of the awkward shyness so common to European children, he immediately read a portion of his Guzzaratee studies in an audible voice, and retired to his carpet evidently pleased at the distinction.

The fame of the Native Education Society's Schools has spread far and wide; and in truth very deservedly. On the occasion of my visit, I met a singularly intelligent high caste native, who introduced himself as Soolochinam Moodeliar* from

* Moodeliar. The distinguishing title of the *caste* of Cowkeepers.

Travancore. He had been educated at the Rajah's school at Tinnevilly, where Colonel Fraser, who was late President at Travancore, took a powerful interest in the improvement of the people. The school is now in a languishing condition, induced by the absence of its patron, * and Soolochinam, fully appreciating the value of knowledge, had brought his only son, a fine lad of fourteen, from Madras to Bombay, to place him in the Society's schools. This intelligent person spoke the English language both grammatically and fluently; his choice of words was particularly good, and his general manner dignified and graceful. In the course of a very long conversation on the subject of Native Education, Soolochinam frequently expressed an earnest hope, that a little mature experience only was required, to induce the people of India, generally, to

* Colonel Fraser is now resident at the Court of Hyderabad, in the Deckan.

embrace with eagerness the opportunities for instruction which were daily becoming more available. He spoke also with deep gratitude of the European gentlemen connected with all institutions originated for the benefit of the native population, and particularly so, of his friend and patron, Colonel Fraser. The son of this fine old man, was eventually admitted into the schools; and I doubt not, that a few such instances as these, of influential individuals returning educated and intelligent to their distant homes, will induce the establishment of local schools, under native support and patronage, with the additional advantages of European supervision. Unfortunately, there does not at present exist any public stimulus to the pursuit of knowledge by natives of respectability; the Purvoe or writer forms the link between the gentle and working classes, and all appointments requiring to be filled by persons of a superior caste, are now given only to Europeans. Application has, I

believe, been made, that some offices of trust may be especially set apart, to be occupied, as occasion may suggest, by native gentlemen of education and talent.

Among Parsee merchants, information of all descriptions is, of course, eminently valuable in the conduct of their mercantile transactions; and of this fact the worthy traders are fully aware; but to the Hindoos, the pursuit of knowledge offers no other reward than mental gratification. Desirable indeed is it that our liberal and enlightened views may acknowledge the necessity of aiding the progress already made; the success which has attended the Society's schools, must carry with it the broad conviction, that similar means will produce the same results in the social condition of India, as they have among the aboriginal inhabitants of those countries now enjoying the highest state of civilization and refinement;—on this subject the learned and amiable biographer of Agricola, has afforded materials for a very in-

teresting comparison. He proves the British Isles to have been once the stronghold of ferocious islanders, and the asylum of Druids, whose altars daily reeked with the sacrifice of human victims. He describes the country as being torn by the factions of various chieftains, and he enlarges on the fierceness of the hill tribes, and their subsequent reduction to obedience. He speaks of the degeneracy of the subdued, of the want of union which betrayed a powerful and warlike people, of the alacrity with which they served their masters, and the readiness with which they paid their tribute. India stands in a similar position to Britain now, which Britain once did to the powers of Rome. To Agricola we are indebted for wise regulations, and for the establishment of an efficient plan of general education. He gave to the sons of the leading chiefs, a "tincture of letters;" he encouraged the natives by assistance and exhortation, and introduced manners which served to sweeten

slavery. We, the descendants of this once savage tribe of painted islanders, have now a name hallowed and glorious throughout all lands; benefitting, as we have done, by the introduction of enlightenment, how sacred is the obligation to do as we have been done by. The lesson left us by Agricola is rife with instruction. Our military rule in India cannot retain its strength; the very basis totters at the approach of civilization; but we have the materials around us wherewith to erect a monument of fame, which shall reach unto the heavens, and endure for ages.

The wealthy and influential natives of the Presidency are doing much to accelerate improvement; yet little that is really valuable can result from their endeavours, without the aid and guidance of superior intelligence. The native youth also require some anticipated distinction in their future career, which shall be sufficient to stimulate and encourage their pursuit of knowledge; this boon is in the power of the

British government to grant, and great is the anxiety lest it be withheld.

Among other local advantages, the natives of Bombay support several newspapers, published in the vernacular languages. The best of these, and probably that most circulated, is the Durpun, or Mirror, edited by Bal-Shastree, and printed in the Mahratta character. The Chabouk, or Lash, and the Samarchar, or News, are both Guzzeratee papers; while a Parsee publishes the Jami-i-Jamshid, or Cup of Life. The editors of these papers are little acquainted with the state of British, continental, or colonial politics; the Parsee journal treats principally of commerce; the news of the Chabouk and the Durpun is local and domestic, and the editors often indulge in severe strictures on the manners of the times, and never fail to unveil for public observation any social errors among their own community, or any flagrant absurdities which may attract their attention in the conduct of Europeans. The English

papers published in Bombay* are now perused by the native community, and an intention exists of bringing out a periodical, to be edited (as it is said) by Bal-Shastree, and to contain essays and remarks on scientific subjects, with notices on European literature. A magazine of this description would doubtless meet encouragement and support from the native gentry of the Presidency; but until the establishment of provincial schools and lecture rooms, its circulation must be limited, and the good effected consequently trifling.

The whole question of education, in its bearings upon human nature generally, and on the social condition of India in particular, is eminently interesting; and a train of irresistible reasoning might be adduced, to prove, that in the present moral and political state of our eastern empire, the best security lies in assisting the progress of civilization, which must now inevitably

* The "Gazette," the "Courier," and the "Times."

advance, despite any efforts to check it that could possibly be made. It was not, however, my intention to dilate upon a subject which might be so much better treated by others, but simply to describe such scenes as have most particularly excited my attention.

CHAPTER III.

THE BURRAH BAZAARS.

"And by great waters the seed of Sihon, the harvest of the river is her revenue; and she is a mart of nations." PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH.

THE word Bazaar, conveys a widely different idea to the inhabitants of the east and west. To a European, it expresses an emporium of varied articles of elegance and taste; the resort of the idle, the beautiful, the gay. The Asiatic understands by it, a heated dusty road, lined with open shops devoted to traffic, and crowded by the dense population of a native city, together with the strangers that are within its gates.

The town of Bombay contains three principal bazaars, from which branch uncountable cross roads, each swarming with its busy crowds. The population of the Presidency is estimated at about four hundred thousand, which census includes, perhaps, a more varied community than is to be found elsewhere, in a space of similar extent.

The Bazaars are lined with open shops, in which all descriptions of workmen are to be seen, occupied in their various callings. In one, a party of lean and slippered Dirzis, some, master Feebles in their way, with spectacles on nose, and shears in hand, cut, and stitch together in form, the ankrikas and cholahs submitted to their art. From the door of another, float streamers of gaily coloured turban cloths, dripping with the most brilliant of the native dyes; in a third, glistening bangles, and ornamental Hookah snakes, serve equally to attract the labouring slave girl, and the haughty Moslem.

The water vessels of the brass founder, and the potter, rise in pyramids in a neighbouring store; while in many more, the grain merchant vends his Badjiree, and Dâl; and for the more luxurious passenger, heaps of rich dates, and saucers filled with the finest Hulwah* from Bushire, display their tempting sweetness.

The Jains, who form a very important clique in the native community of Bombay, possess numerous temples in the principal bazaars. Resembling dwelling houses in form, they would probably remain unnoticed by the stranger, were it not for the rich carvings of their balustrades and verandahs, and the grotesquely painted figures of men and animals, traced on the finely ornamented fronts.

* A glutinous and very delicious sweetmeat, prepared in Persia, from sugar, almonds, rosewater, butter, and other delicate confections, and sent to Bombay in earthern saucers.

During the last few years, the leading roads of the native town have been watered, and even tolerably lighted. This has proved very advantageous, after all the inconveniences which attended the olden system of dust and darkness; it is still, however, only for an hour or two after sun-rise, that horsemen or carriages can pass unimpeded by stoppages of varied character; the busy evil being increased as the night approaches, by the processions of native marriages. Animated with the sonorous beats of the tom-tom, and the full clamour of sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, these festive groups parade the highways of the town, attended by "troops of friends," mounted upon unbroken and restive steeds; whilst brilliant Chinese lamps, suspended from the doors of those concerned, and crackers bursting beneath the horses' feet, combine to place in very imminent peril all who encounter a hymeneal party in their mid career.

The early riser, desiring to pursue his ride into the lovely scenes which skirt the town, will find these roads clear, clean, and void of all offence. The porters and artisans then lie shrouded in their cumlies; the market people have a wide path, as they bring in the fresh fruits of the neighbouring country; the toddy-drawer appears, crowned with an earthen vessel, overflowing with the delicious juice of the graceful palm tree; and Hindoo girls seated behind baskets of bright blossoms, string fragrant wreaths, to adorn the altars of their gods. Thus fresh and tranquil remain the elements of the scene, until the hurry and the toil of life fill it with that suffocating heat and deafening clamour, attendant upon the interests of eager traffic.

Offensive to every sense, as the dust and noise of these crowded ways must be, steaming under the noontide influence of a tropic sun, 'tis worth the cost, to stop a moment at the entrance of a great bazaar,

and looking along the wide and busy way, watch the full tide of human beings, jostling and vociferating against each other, as the throng presses onwards, each individual animated with the object of labour or of profit. More strange and interesting is it still, to move among the groups, and passing, mark the varied characters which form the living mass.

To a stranger's eye, the chintz bazaar will afford the most curious scene; the road skirts that particular portion of the bay occupied by native shipping, and is wholly devoted to the purposes of commerce. Here indeed is a "mart of nations," where the genius of traffic reigns triumphant, and the merchandize and produce of all the nations of the east seem garnered in one common store, awaiting an escort to the lands where the arts and manufactures of civilized life will increase the value of nature's gifts. Piles of rich gums and aromatic spices, carboys of oil and rose water, pure ivory from the forests

of Ceylon, rhinoceros hides from the burning coast of Zanzibar, the richest produce of Africa, India, Persia, and Arabia, is here cast in large heaps, mingling with Coir cables, huge blocks, and ponderous anchors, the requisite materiel of island exportation.

On the highway, porters bending beneath square bales of tightly compressed cotton, stagger to and fro, as if overpowered with their loads; Arabs with ponderous turbans of finely checked cloth, and Aàbas loosely flowing, lounge lazily along; Persians in silken vests, with black lamb skin caps, the softest produce of Bokhara, tower above the crowd; Banians, dirty and bustling, wearing red turbans bristling with pens and memoranda, jostle roughly to the right and left; Bangies with suspended bales, or well-filled water vessels; Fakirs from every part of India; Jains in their snowy vests, with staff and brush, like palmers of the olden time; Padres with round black hats and sable cloaks;

Jews of the tribe of Beni Israel, all mingle in the throng; while ever and again, a bullock hackerie struggles against the mass, or a Parsee, dashing onwards in his gaily painted buggy, forces an avenue for an instant, when the eager crowd, rapidly closing in its rear, sweeps on a resistless torrent as before.

The Arab stables, which occupy a considerable space in the great bazaar, form a powerful attraction to the gentlemen of the Presidency. Military men, of whatever rank, in India, consider it necessary to possess at least a couple of horses. Colts being usually preferred for a new purchase, the stables are eagerly resorted to whenever a fresh importation arrives from the gulf. The appearance of the poor steeds, on their debarkation, is wretched indeed; the want of pure air and exercise, the filth and close stowage of the Arab boats, "forcing their bones to stick out like the corners of a real," reduce them to the proportions of that

horse so good, which appertained to the chivalrous state of La Mancha's knight. In this sad plight good judges secure the best for the turf; and the rest remain in the stables, where they fetch prices, either commensurate with the merits they may possess, or the lack of knowledge in the purchaser.

The horse merchants of the Presidency are not more conscientious than the Tattersalls of the west; and the "griffin logue" are consequently victimised by most grievous impositions. Tempted beyond the power of resistance, the representations of the dealer meet with easy credence from the uninitiated, and his offers of credit are readily accepted.

A good hack, or roadster, may be purchased for about fifty pounds; but a hundred and fifty is considered a fair price for an Arab colt of promise, calculated either for the duties of a charger, or, if possessing "the speed of thought" in all his limbs, for the exciting interests of the turf.

On a visitor to the stables desiring to see the action of a valuable colt, one

"Wild as the wild deer, and untaught,
With spur and bridle undefiled,"

an Arab rider grasps its flowing mane, flings himself suddenly on its back, strikes his bare heels into its glossy sides, and with hair and garments wildly flying, urges the noble creature to a furious gallop; then, with a skilful check in mid career, he brings it, with expanded eye and reeking flank, back to the appointed stall.

With the exception of horses intended for the cavalry, it is not customary to subject Arabs to the exercise of the manège; the natural disposition of the "desert born" being itself so noble, so full of nervous energy, yet so tractable and gentle withal, that good treatment is alone required to ensure his ready obedience to the rider's will.

The sturdy little animals, known as Pegue ponies, are sometimes to be procured;

they are scarce, however, and considered valuable. The forms of these useful creatures resemble that of the Greek horse, as it appears on the gems and frescos of the antique school. Short necked, broad chested, and large hoofed, with a singularly thick coat, the Pegue pony seems formed to endure unusual toil. In mountainous countries they become invaluable, being trained to a shuffling run, with which pace they ascend and descend the most rocky and dangerous passes; and that with a speed which compasses a long march in an equal period with a horse of ordinary paces. On the Neilgherry and Mahabuleshwar hills, Pegue ponies are highly prized, fifty or sixty pounds being the usual price of one possessing the necessary qualifications.

It is well known that leather-dressing and shoemaking, are trades practised only by the outcaste races of the Hindoo people. Few shoe repositories are therefore to be found among the shops of the bazaar; for

the convenience of Europeans, tolerably good boots may be purchased from itinerant Bengalees, at a cost of about twelve shillings a pair, inferior, it is true, to the works of a Hoby or a Stunt, yet respectable imitations of the superior article.

Less fortunate are the ladies of the Presidency; circumstances frequently constraining them to rest content with such ill cut pantoufles as may emanate from the genius of a China man, the "Melnotte" of the Burrah bazaar. This worthy personage, who has seen fit to adopt the English name of "Jackson" on his sign-board, may be daily met, arrayed in dirty linen frock, straw hat, and wiry hair, plaited in triple cords, descending to his heels; thus grotesquely fitted, this Crispin of the celestial empire sallies abroad for orders, displaying a pattern book filled with the worst descriptions of half tanned kid, and rusty China satin. It will be seen, therefore, that Bombay is singularly deficient in members of the worshipful com-

pany of shoemakers; those who pursue the trade have little knowledge of the art, and the leather in use speedily becomes worthless, from the ignorance of the curriers, and their abundant use of lime water in the preparation of the skins.

The most curious manufacture of Bombay, is the ivory Mosaic work, which the liberality of homeward-bound friends has now rendered so much appreciated in England, in the form of presentation work boxes, desks, watch stands, and numerous other ornamental souvenirs. The Mosaic is sometimes used as a sort of veneer over the whole surface of an article; and at others, simply as an inlaid bordering on cedar or ivory, being frequently enriched by the addition of silver, to the varied and beautiful colours which compose the Mosaic. This art is of Sindhian origin; now, however, exercised to a very considerable extent in Bombay, the ivory cutters pursuing their labours in the open shops of the bazaars. Until chance afforded me the

opportunity of observing the method employed by the inlayers, I had frequently been surprised at the low price demanded for trifling articles, adorned with this delicate and beautiful work. Two planes of ivory, silver, or whatever it is desired should form the extreme edges of the bordering, are placed, by means of a frame constructed for this purpose, one above the other, at a given distance. Small rods of variously stained ivory, are first dipped in strong colourless glue, and then placed horizontally between the planes, with such arrangements as shall hereafter form the desired pattern. The whole is submitted to heavy pressure until perfectly dry. Bordering being required, the ivory cutter severs from either end of the prepared planes, a portion of about half a quarter of an inch thick, when the most perfect pattern of Mosaic bordering is obtained. By this ingenious method, two six-inch planes of ivory will afford patterns for a considerable number of pretty articles, which

are sold at a third of the price which would be required, were each strip of the Mosaic bordering arranged expressly for the purpose. The value of a handsome desk or workbox, of the Bombay work, is about six guineas; but an ornamented watch-stand or card-case may be obtained for a few shillings.

It is not unamusing for persons desiring to purchase a collection of such articles, to send for a party of ivory cutters to their bungalow; the spirit of rivalry then quite overbalances the fear of loss; and each excited chapman strives to emulate his neighbour in underselling his particular wares.

The art of working in Mosaic seems to have been succeeded in Sindh, by that of ornamental veneering, which the turners of Hyderabad employ in the finishing ornaments, of curious melon-shaped and circular boxes. The form of the article being made in remarkably thin and fine grained wood, several coats of veneer are laid over

it, of brilliant and varied colours; orange, blue, and red, being most common. By means of a small punch or awl, pressed through one, two, three, or four coats of the veneer, as the colours of each may be required, a neat and pretty pattern is produced, so neatly cut, as to deceive the eye with the appearance of being painted. This art is not yet practised in Bombay, but would be available for a great variety of ornamental purposes.

The most profitable trade carried on in the Burrah bazaars, is the sale of toddy; to so considerable an extent has the general use of this intoxicating beverage increased, that government have been constrained to issue an order, forbidding the existence of toddy stores within a regulated distance of each other. On a moderate computation, however, every sixth shop advertises its sale. The evil which results from this temptation to excess, in the high and heated ways of a populous town, affords the magistrates occasion to remark,

that the increase of depravity and crime has been far more rapid since toddy stores have become general.

Before sunrise, the juice of the fair palm is cool and refreshing, suited to prepare man for the toil and labour of the day; but after fermentation has commenced, its character is wholly changed, and it is, unfortunately, only when possessing inebriating qualities that it is appreciated by the people.

In the environs of Bombay, the rising grounds are as generally covered by trees producing toddy, as the flats are with paddy grounds and rice. An annual tax of one rupee is levied by government on each tree; toddy plantations are consequently considered excellent property on lands which do not admit of irrigation, which is the case with all the rocky heights of the island.

Several trees of the same species afford toddy, varying in excellence; but the juice of the lofty fan palm is esteemed "premiere qualitè."

The method employed in extracting the toddy is worthy remark; the drawers are a peculiar caste of people, called Bundarries, the aborigines of Bombay. From habit, these men attain extraordinary dexterity in ascending the loftiest trees with little other assistance than may be afforded by the natural knots or sheaths of their slender stems.

The costume of the Bundarrie is a close crimson cap, bound round the head with a small handkerchief, the depending corner protecting his neck from the influence of the sun. A stiff leather petticoat descends to the knee, fastened round the waist with a thong, which secures the necessary implements of his calling, and supports a strong hook, on which the Bundarrie swings a chattie, previous to commencing his ascent. As the toddy is found to flow most freely from the top of the tree, immediately at the base of the crowning summit of leaves, an incision is made at this point, from around which the sheaths

are stripped, and the mouth of an earthern vessel secured to it by a cord, and both at sunset and sunrise, the overflowing chattie is replaced by a fresh and empty vessel. A wood, containing four or five hundred palm and date trees, has a singular effect, each with its red earthern chattie attached, and interspersed with Bundarries, sharpening their implements, while lounging from tree to tree, with a curious rolling motion, acquired by the constraints of their peculiar vocation.

To ascend smooth and branchless trees, many fifty feet in height, appears a dangerous and difficult achievement; yet the practised Bundarrie effects this task with ease, speed, and security. Arrived at the foot of a tree, the toddy drawer loosens a thong secured around his waist, prepared with a knot and loop at either end. This he passes behind the stem, fixing the balls of his feet firmly against the root. Shifting the thong as he ascends, the Bundarrie supports himself by its extreme ends, until

within reach of the chattie, when passing one end of the strap round his waist, he links the knot and loop dexterously together, and leans on the leather to support him while at work. The empty chattie, swinging at his back, is then exchanged for that already filled by the flowing toddy. Passing it to one side, the Bundarrie proceeds to clean and renew the incision; the mouth of the fresh chattie is then firmly attached, and the Bundarrie rapidly descends, moving away, whetstone in hand, to repeat his labours on the neighbouring trees.

The stem of the slender and lofty palm presents the fewest facilities of ascent; and it is not without a shudder, that the stranger's eye can watch a Bundarrie loosen his stay from the towering summit, and slide rapidly down the smooth and notchless stem.

If capable of appreciating lovely scenery, the Bundarrie would enjoy enviable advantages from his elevated position.

Questionable as this may be, the toddy drawer is frequently seen resting from his labours, and apparently occupied in a survey of the surrounding country. With a mind engrossed by the interests of his calling, he probably sees only the suspended toddy vessels of the neighbouring woods; or more curious, peers into the occupations of those who beneath pursue their busy way. It appears that in many cases of crime, brought before the notice of the Bombay magistracy, evidence which has condemned the accused has been elicited from a Bundarrie, often sole witness of the culprit's guilt.

Murderers, availing themselves of the last twilight ray, to decoy their victims to the closest depths of the palmy woods, and there robbing them of the few gold or silver ornaments they might possess, have little thought of the watchful toddy drawer, in his lofty and shaded eyry.

Varieties of toddy trees mingle beautifully together, and add much to the distant

landscape, to which the wooded knolls form a graceful foreground, when viewed from any of the smooth and winding roads of this most lovely island. Pretty and secluded bungalows are scattered among the woods, commanding charming views of the glittering bay and luxuriant inland scenery; but unfortunately, from the miasma which is said to arise from the rice grounds below, they are, at particular seasons, considered unhealthy residences. Moreover, to those who think not,

> "The wild freshness of morning,
> Its tears and its smiles are worth evening's best light,"

and desire to sacrifice its invigorating influence to the sybaritish indulgence of a "little more folding of the hands to rest," the constant click, click, which accompanies the sharpening of the Bundarries' knife would prove intolerable; and here will the toddy drawer ever be found with the earliest breath of morn, wandering

among the shadowy woods, in pursuance of his allotted task.

The influence of that busy traffic, which animates the populous bazaars, is extended far beyond their limits. Towards evening the weary labourer retires, worn with toil, to his mud-built shed; but the high roads are yet occupied by wayfarers preparing for the traffic of to-morrow's morn, and clouds of dust advertize the approach of droves of laden bullocks, and strings of carts, bearing produce for the Bombay markets.

This is particularly the case on the road leading to "Matunga," which would otherwise form one of the pleasantest rides without the town. Once a pretty artillery station, Matunga now presents only the desolate appearance of a deserted village. Graceful boughs of shady trees droop upon the broken roofs of crumbling dwellings; gaudy blossoms, and the paler "moon flower" peep from amid the fallen stones, and gardens, once gay "in bloom and fruitage bright," are tangled and overgrown

with thorns. Matunga is now abandoned; the demon of disease claimed it for his own, and under the insidious form of "Dracunculus," * worked havoc among the troops. The prevalence of this disease, caused either by the badness of the water, or some less suspected cause, formed abundant reason for the desertion of this lovely spot, as a military station; for by it, the strong man was brought low, and the waste of constitutional energy proved incalculable. At Kirkee, Poonah, and many of the largest and otherwise healthiest stations of Western India, cases of "Dracunculus" are common; not sufficiently so, however, to produce an evil, which would place them on an equality with the desolate Matunga, of which with truth it may be said,

"A merry spot it was in days of yore,
But something ails it now—the place is cursed."

* The disease known throughout India by the more common name of "Guinea worm."

The natives of India are, as it is well known, eminently expert in extracting the Guinea worm; but the operation is tedious and painful, causing a waste in the strength of the patient, which would be with difficulty imagined possible at the first appearance of the disease. A slight cutaneous irritation is the first symptom of "Dracunculus;" this being perfectly local, indicates the position of the worm; a puncture is then made over the head of the reptile, of which portions are carefully drawn out, and wound round a bit of cotton, which the operator secures at the opening of the wound with small straps of adhesive plaister. A Guinea worm is frequently two feet in length, and portions are extracted daily, until the whole of the reptile is obtained. The patient is sometimes confined for six months to the couch, enduring, for a considerable portion of that time, most acute agony. The effect of this long suffering is greatly to debilitate the constitution of the diseased, and a voyage

to Europe is frequently the only means by which it can be recruited.

In attempting to describe Bombay, it appears requisite to remark on its original history, rise, and varied native occupation. Correct information on these subjects is unfortunately not procurable. The Muckadums* of every caste have been applied to in vain; their chobrahs† contain few facts which can be relied on, contradicting the statements of each other, and proving the wildness and inaccuracy of their calculations, concerning both the pretended census of the castes, and the history of their establishment as island settlers. As an added difficulty, the natives instantly take alarm, and become jealous of the motives of Europeans, when pressing queries on their number, origin, or domestic economy; and the Jain priests, who probably are most capable of affording information of value, are much too intolerant to confide

* Overseers.

† Account books.

the history of their people to the keeping of a stranger.

It little imports us, however, to sift the past history of a place, whose present condition demands our best attention. The "brightest jewel" of our British dependencies is now brought within the observation of the intelligent and "thinking people of England;" and policy seems at last, to urge the necessity of attention to the best interests of India.

A full developement of its sources of natural wealth must increase the value of that magnificent country, the richest and most productive of all our colonies. To effect this, the commerce of the presidencies must be encouraged; and to the provinces must be held out a sufficient stimulus, to arouse the industry of their agricultural and manufacturing classes. The great marts of the ancient world, Tyre, Sidon, and Ophir, with the fair cities of the plain, exist but in the history of the past; but the site of their desolate gran-

deur will teach Britain the instability of possessions, which have already cost a heavy price in blood and treasure. The progress of opinion, no less than the force of present circumstances, renders it more than ever desirable, that the natives of *Western* India most particularly, should, as an intelligent and commercial people, value our allegiance as friends, rather than regard us as the grinding oppressors of their fatherland, whom they require only union and opportunity, to expel from their shores.

That the material exists for restoring freedom and wealth to the people of India, there can remain no doubt. We see the bazaars of the native town of the most interesting presidency, rich and populous, teeming with an enterprising and mercantile people, and abounding with productions of natural wealth, rich gems, and precious metals. The neighbouring bay is animated with rude and foreign crafts, laden with curious manufactures, or the exuberant

produce of the most fertile soils. The dock-yards, justly considered the finest in the world, send forth their teak-built vessels, to enrich with their cargo the isles of the far distant west; and the raw and unpolished material is exported from a land, which possessed a knowledge of those arts calculated to improve the condition of a people, and whose fine linens, brilliant dyes, costly wools, and glittering jewels, awakened the admiration of the civilized nations of the west, while yet the inhabitants of our remote and sea-girt isle roamed wild and unclad, among the fastnesses of their mountain homes. We look on the east, and her desert lands seem to whisper a reproach that they are not now teeming and fruitful as of old; we see that in the crowded and busy ways of the Burrah bazaars, is accumulated the rich produce of such localities as are calculated to afford increased revenue to our several civil and financial departments, but the art of the weaver and the lapidary

is forgotten. We, the consummately civilized, have brought ignorance in the wake of our conquests; and this to a people, "old in arts and literature, before the primeval forests of Britain had started from their ancient silence at the voice of man."

The sinews of war are again strained for territorial protection and acquirement; but the influence of public opinion will, it is to be trusted, change the object of the struggle. The splendid scheme of navigating the noble Indus, will probably become the means of introducing industry and manufacture among isolated thousands; and of bringing justice and wisdom to the courts of their barbarian princes.

In exchange for these benefits, monuments more durable than the altars of the triumphant Greek, will record the dominion of British power; and where the great invader of eastern freedom first felt the strength of an arm determined to support its rights, the rude descendants of the

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princely Porus may again esteem the arts and elegancies of civilized existence.

The commercial interests of the world would gain much by a liberal line of policy; the stimulus of interest might awaken the slumbering knowledge of olden times; hungry barbarism give place to commercial opulence, and fabrics of costly and inimitable manufacture again attract the wealthy trader; while thus the shores of Western India, with the stores of her great bazaars, might be as eagerly sought in the maritime enterprise of foreign lands, as were the crowning cities of the east, when the princely merchants of Venice displayed their red, gold, and costly stuffs, upon the busy pass of the Rialto.

CHAPTER IV.

PRESIDENCY SETTLERS.

"There are many of them vastly rich, but take care to make little public show of it; though they live in their houses in the utmost luxury and magnificence."

LETTERS OF LADY WORTLEY MONTAGUE.

HAVING been long anxious to observe somewhat of the domestic manners of the Parsees, I gladly availed myself of the invitation of Hormarjee Bomanjee, Esq., to visit his family, at "Lowjee Castle." This splendid mansion is situated near the governor's residence at Parell; and has long been in possession of the same family, who rank amongst the most wealthy and influential Parsees of the Bombay presidency.

After entering the spacious hall of Lowjee castle, we found ourselves ushered up a flight of broad and handsome stairs, which led to a magnificent drawing-room, decorated with the utmost richness. Luxurious couches, and ottomans, covered with damask silk, were arranged with gilded fauteuils of the most commodious form; good paintings, including full-length portraits of Lord Nelson and Sir Charles Forbes, ornamented the walls; and superb windows of painted glass, cast the brilliantly tinged rays of the departing sun, on chandeliers of dazzling lustre. Princely in general effect, the whole combined well with the dignified and graceful deportment of its possessor.

Receiving us with considerable address, Hormarjee introduced his family; the flower of this interesting group, being a little damsel of about eight years of age, —a lovely, sylph-like creature, prettily attired in the costume of her people, which, although not according with our usual ideas of the dress best suited to childish

habits, assimilated well with the languid air and fragile form of the little Parsee maiden. Rich crimson satin trowsers, were confined by gold bangles around her slender ancles; a chemise of delicate and snowy fabric, fastened at the throat by a single gem, was adorned with numerous necklaces, Màlàs, or talismans; and a small crimson and embroidered cap concealed her luxuriant tresses.

The brothers of the little bèauty, were intelligent and handsome lads, pupils of the college school. They spoke English fluently, and seemed gratified at any enquiry on the subject of their studies. Each wore the simple cotton ankrika, and chintz turban, of that precise form peculiar to the Parsees; but their family rank was announced, by a remarkable fairness of complexion, as well as by the brilliant gems which flashed on their tiny hands, and the size of the superb but unset emerald which depended from the left ear of each.

Hormarjee, with an air of the easiest good breeding, entered into conversation, on a variety of subjects of general interest; speaking of the extensive trade with China, and the value of the rich freight frequently imported to Bombay by his own vessel, the "Lowjee family," Hormarjee mentioned how much the Parsees were indebted to European protection, in the commencement of their commercial enterprises. He spoke also of the abuses of the free press: and lamented that the "Chabouk," and its editor, should be encouraged by native society, in the radical tone adopted against the acts of the local government.

On the subject of education, Hormarjee expressed great satisfaction at the establishment of the "Junior College School," and the appointment of its admirable teacher. I ventured to enquire, if, with his liberality of opinion, he did not wish his daughter to share similar advantages to those now enjoyed by his sons: and whether he

would individually object to the introduction of suitable acquirements among the ladies of his family?

Hormarjee replied with readiness, as if the question had been one which had previously met with his consideration. The time, he said, had not yet arrived for the education of Asiatic women; he doubted not, however, that the progress of enlightened views would achieve this mighty triumph over usage and opinion: meanwhile, he assured me, the condition of Parsee women was one of great ease and serenity; that their time was agreeably occupied by domestic duties, and trifling accomplishments; that they were not secluded, in the manner generally supposed; but, if restrained from intercourse with foreigners, yet constantly permitted to enjoy the society of their relations and friends. In addition to these remarks, Hormarjee expressed his conviction, that a few years would introduce great alterations in the manners of the Parsee people,

and the increased liberty and enlightenment of the women would inevitably result.

Polygamy is forbidden by Parsee law. Notwithstanding which, Hormarjee is united to a second wife, his first being yet alive. For a time, this circumstance created a powerful feeling against him; but his wealth, character, and influence prevailed. In accordance with the customs of his people, Hormarjee was betrothed at an early age to his cousin, who, when arrived at womanhood, unhappily possessed a figure and countenance, which, like that of the unfortunate "Jean de France," inspired her husband with unconquerable disgust. Desiring to repudiate this lady, Hormarjee besought his mother to obtain for him another wife; after very considerable public persecution, this object was attained, and Hormarjee's family circle is graced by a fair minister of its comforts, every way calculated to attach his best affections.

When, after an interesting and length-

ened visit, we rose, intending to take our leave of Lowjee castle, and its amiable inmates, a servitor brought forward a large silver salver, covered with blooming bouquets, most tastefully arranged. In presenting the choicest for my acceptance, Hormarjee gracefully expressed his hope, that I would pardon the adoption of an eastern custom, by which to denote the pleasure our society had afforded him.

The use of flowers on all occasions of rejoicing, is common among the Parsees. On wedding and birth-days, the relatives of the parties most concerned, assemble in the lower part of the house devoted to festivity; and being seated, an attendant bears round a salver of the choicest flowers; each guest offers a congratulatory wish, and places a cluster of blossoms in his turban; on being sprinkled with the customary rose-water, he retires.

The Parsee ladies possess the advantages of beauty, to an eminent degree. In comformance with oriental usage, they

are of course secluded; but on the occasion of a ball being given to the European society by any wealthy Parsee merchants, the ladies are frequently invited to the private apartments, and introduced to the female branches of the family.

The gift of loveliness is not alone bestowed upon the higher classes of Parsee women; but, "when the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water," the Parsee maidens may frequently be remarked for their handsome countenances, and dignified, yet feminine deportment. On these occasions, the women of a city are seen probably to the greatest advantage; their "bravery" of gold and tinkling ornaments is donned; the brightest hues of their silken draperies, arranged with exquisite effect; and the brazen vessel, which bespeaks the industrious performance of a domestic duty, poised gracefully and securely on the head. Few scenes are more interesting than the morning gatherings round an eastern well.

This custom so eminently belongs to the earliest ages of the world, and its primitive society, that the really picturesque effect is heightened to the imaginative mind by the charms of association: and the busy fancy, rich in retrospective power, creates for itself images of the olden world, when the daughters of the Patriarchal tribes went forth to fill their brazen water vessels, beside the shaded wells of Palestine.

Year by year, the importance of the Guebre strangers has increased in Western India, until their wealth has become incalculable. The number of Parsee inhabitants of Bombay alone, is estimated at forty thousand. They are an enterprising and public spirited people, devoting their riches to worthy and beneficial purposes. To the most influential of this class, the Presidency is indebted for its greatest improvements; and the liberality of the Parsee merchants is conspicuous, when public subscription is required for any

object, tending to promote the common good.

The Parsees are said to have landed originally at Diu, from Ormuz, in the Gulf of Persia.* These adventurous strangers brought not their women, to brave the dangers of a foreign strand; but settling eventually in the province of Guzzerat, selected wives from the fairest maidens of their adopted land.

Thus the Guebre race appears naturalized in Western India; a long residence having identified their interests with those of its own people.

The richest Parsee in Bombay, is supposed to be Jemsetjee Jeejeebhoy, Esq. This gentleman is the largest shipowner in the docks, affording daily employment to about three thousand persons. The career of Jemsetjee, or as he is more familiarly termed, the "Bottley Wallah" affords

* Diu Head is the southernmost point of the province of Guzzerat; the castle and town are now in the possession of the Portuguese.

a curious illustration of the insignificant means by which enormous wealth is not unfrequently amassed. The mercantile transactions of this influential individual, had their humble origin in a traffic of empty bottles, a considerable item among the list of perquisities, which swell the salary of a Bombay butler. For years the little basket of Jemsetjee and the forthcoming rupee, were anxiously expected, after the dinner or the ball; but as time rolled on, fortune smiled on the accumulating trader, and the five-storied mansion of the "Bottley Wallah," now looks proudly down on the scene of his early toil. Kind-hearted in his affluence, Jemsetjee is universally respected. To the poor, his hand is ever open to relieve their wants; impartial in his benevolence, he seeks extreme necessity, rather than extensive merit, in the objects of his charity; and daily, an hour after dawn, servants, laden with bags of grain, distribute from the

threshold of the "Bottley Wallah," food to all who ask it.

The Parsee gentry own beautiful country houses, which are scattered about the Island, at various distances from the native town. To these, their families resort on seasons of festivity, indulging in all kinds of diversions, and the choicest wines, and most delicious viands, the Presidency can afford. In their style and habits of living, the Parsees are luxurious in the extreme; their carriages, horses, and furniture, are of the best, and most splendid description; and their balls, with the exception of the parties at Parell, exceed any which can be given in Bombay. "Lowjee Castle," and "Non Pareil," are the usual scenes of these festivities. At the last, I remember passing one of the most agreeable evenings I have spent in India. The house is situated about five miles from the Fort; and on the evening in question, the road was crowded with every variety of native and European vehicle; avant-couriers

bearing huge flambeaus, ran before the splendid carriages of the wealthy natives; buggies and shigrams became entangled in the throng, and the whole was hurry, bustle and excitement. The broad avenue which leads to the fine entrance of the mansion was illumined by torches, and flanked with a double row of Parsee servants attired in their gayest liveries; while the surrounding shubberies, rich in orange and lime blossoms, and adorned with half shaded lights, arranged effectively among the foliage, resembled an impervious wood sparkling with brilliant and innumerable fireflies.

During the evening, natching was introduced for the gratification of the native guests; and a first and second supper, formed, to a considerable portion of the invited, not the least agreeable part of the evening's entertainment.

It is difficult to obtain information from Parsees, on their history or religious tenets. Two large fire temples situated in the Fort, are held supremely sacred; they are closed

to foreign observation, but our good friend Hormarjee assured me, that neither contained anything worth inspection. He described them, as consisting of a spacious unfurnished hall, having a central arch of masonry, surmounting the vase of sacred fire.

The Priests of the temple strongly resemble such as may yet be met with in the synagogue of the Israelite; and are distinguishable by their snowy vests, uncoloured turbans, and flowing beards. Unlike the priestly class in general, the spiritual teachers of the Parsee doctrines are a despised race. The duty of some among them, is to bear the funeral bier, to its appointed niche in the silent tower, where alone the wild bird flaps his wing, in impatience for his coming feast. Whether or not, it is the peculiar vocation of this class among the priesthood, which inspires with unutterable loathing the imagination of their fellow-men, is uncertain; but if a Parsee encounters one of these ministers

of the dead in his usual walk, he shrinks from him, as from some abhorred and unclean thing, which should dispute his path.

It is supposed, that this class of the priesthood were not originally of Guebre extraction, but were selected for the performance of certain duties, after the landing of the Parsees in Western India. A chief priest, however, enforces his authority over the whole, without reference to any original distinction; and appoints officiates to preside over the awg-gurries, or temples, dedicated to this most ancient worship.

It is customary for the Parsees to observe morning ceremonies for four days after the decease of a male, and twelve, after that of a female relative. On these occasions, the friends of the family forbear to enter the abode already doomed by the breath of Asrael; but sit without, on benches placed against the walls. On the day succeeding death, the relatives of the deceased cause the body to be enveloped

in pure white linen, and a small cap of the same material to be placed upon the head. The Parsees, as worshippers of elemental power, can neither bury or burn their dead; with tears and lamentation, therefore, they bear them to the "towers of silence," as a prey to the eagle and the vulture.

In form, these buildings resemble Martello towers, and are erected on rising grounds, near the sea, apart from human habitation. The interiors are constructed of circles of masonry, each divided into compartments, and sloping towards the centre of the circle; at the base of the narrow pit thus formed, burns the unexpiring and sacred fire, tended by a Priest, sole visitant to the scene of horror. A body being carried to the tower, is inserted, by means of an exterior grating, to the niche designed, and placed in the unoccupied compartment, with the feet towards the centre. As the body is devoured, the bones fall into the pit, and either feed the sacred fire, or are swept

away into the neighbouring waters. At all seasons, the brink of the tower wall may be seen fringed with vultures satiated with their foul repast; while the busy fancy revolts from the imaged spectacle within, the eyeless faces, and the mangled bodies of the dead, hurrying to that corruption, from which nature draws her seeds of necessary, and regenerating change.

As the beams of the morning sun first gleam above the shadowy island of Elephanta, and again, when the bright orb sinks in the western wave, the fire-worshipper seeks the level strand, to offer his sacrifice of ceremonial prayer. With loosened belt, and ritual in hand, he repeats the appointed service, and returns self-justified to his home, not the less disposed to traffic "upon advantage."

The Parsee trader never, for an instant, forgets the interests of his calling. Even at the hour of prayer, his wandering eye betrays the mechanical nature of the service he is engaged in; and should the

temptation arise, of a passing customer addressing him on temporal concerns, he will, without discontinuing his duty, hear, and even briefly reply to the matter, then gabble to its conclusion his appointed task.

The form of marriage among the Parsees is a very simple ceremony; little more, indeed, than a civil contract, ratified by family consent, and abundant festivity. The rite performed by the priest, consists in placing the hand of the bride flat against that of the bridegroom, and binding their united wrists with a double thread of crimson worsted. Being severed, the cincture is secured on the wrist of each, where it remains for a period of eight days; the threads are then unbound, and cast into the water.

Singular-looking female figures, attired in linen wrappers, stiff and Egyptian like, varying strangely in effect, from—

"The beauteous scarf
Veiling an Indian beauty,"

are frequently observed in the high ways of Bombay; and the bright eyes, shining from beneath that embroidered portion of the drapery which conceals the face, betray the animated character of the Jewish bondswoman, despatched on some domestic errand for her master's family.

The Jewish merchants, may in truth be considered as eminently "*good* men," according to Shylock's acceptation of the term; not wearing sufferance as a badge, but rich and sufficient, in all the means, possessions, and appliances of wealth. Strictly tenacious of their family privacy, it is extremely rare to obtain any opportunity of observing their domestic manners.

With proportionate pleasure, therefore, I acquiesced in the proposal of an Armenian lady to accompany her, on a wedding visit to the family of a fair "Jessica," the daughter of a Bagdat merchant in the Fort. Leaving our residence for this purpose together, we threaded the crowded and narrow ways of a portion of the populous

bazaars until then unknown to me, and as the palkees neared each other, and I caught occasional glimpses of my veiled companion, her gorgeous tiara, and flashing jewels, the strange locality, and the novelty of the expedition, brought the inimitable tales of the Arabian Nights strongly to remembrance; and I almost imagined myself attending the splendid wife of Haroun al Raschid, through her ancient city of Tabriz.

Arrived at our destination, we were introduced into a large upper apartment, where several turbaned infants lay sleeping on Arab mats, attended by Jewish women, having small chowries, to protect their repose.

After a short detention, a distant door opened, and the bride, with her mother and sisters, gave us a most courteous welcome. As the appearance and attire of the younger women nearly resembled each other, I shall content myself with attempting to describe the person of the

lady, for whom our visit was most particularly intended.

The bride was certainly not more than fourteen years of age; yet, notwithstanding her extreme youth, there was no lack of feminine expression, in her fair and placid countenance. Her eyes were hazel, and her soft features differed from the common Jewish physiognomy, which, however handsome in youth, frequently acquires harsh distinctiveness at a maturer age. It is customary for the Jewish women to marry at an early period; and the elder sister of the bride, a girl about sixteen, was, I found, the mother of two of the sleeping infants, who had first attracted my attention.

The costume of the fair Jewess brought to my remembrance, yet "with a difference," Mr. Lane's admirable sketch of that adopted by the dancing girls of Cairo.* It consisted of a fine white muslin under dress,

* See a spirited drawing in this author's intelligent and interesting work on the "Modern Egyptians."

plaited in exquisitely small folds from the throat to the waist, and falling to the embroidered yellow slippers, shrouding her pretty feet.

A satin tunic of Tyrian purple, sloped away on the bosom, was clasped at the waist by a single stud, the sleeves falling loose and open from the middle of the arm, fringed with a double row of gold buttons. A shawl of the finest loom of Cashmere, encircled the waist; and costly ornaments, worn after the usual manner, encumbered, where they could not adorn. To complete the costume, a small red velvet cap fitted closely to the head, bound round the brows with a scarf of most vivid hues, and a handkerchief depending from it at the back, passed loosely under the chin; a very *trying* arrangement, even to the most lovely face. With due exception to this single portion of the attire, all was tasteful and well arranged, flowing and antique; fashion in the east, is not a mutable goddess; consequently, its form

was probably the same with that in which the fair Esther, the advocate of her people's rights, appeared before Hegai, in the regal palace of Sushan.

According to an eminently disfiguring custom among the Jewish ladies, the hair of all is parted in long crisped locks upon the forehead, and stained an orange tawny colour by the use of henna. At the back its raven and glossy tint remains, where it is plaited in long ends, each suspending a golden coin.

Observing the curiosity with which I noticed the several articles of their dress, the young Jewesses proposed that I should proceed to the dressing room, to amuse myself with an inspection of their wardrobe.

The apartment was surrounded with japanned and curiously inlaid cabinets, filled with rich tunics, and various "raiment of needlework," with "vestures of gold, wrought about with divers colours." The

chudders,* or envelopes, destined to be worn in public, were all of fine white cotton, ingeniously embroidered, to allow the wearer full liberty of observation, through the interstices of the delicately wrought flowers which composed it. With the exception of the Màlà or talisman, the necklaces, head-ornaments, bracelets, and bangles, were chiefly composed of small coins, suspended by ornamental chains. The largest adopted for this purpose was the Zechin, but many were extremely minute, with a superscription, differing from any I had before seen.

Three eastern languages appeared equally familiar to all the members of the family. Some jocose traveller in a continental diligence, has recorded his surprise at hearing the children of the villages speak such admirable French. A Haileybury student, groaning over the roots of the most difficult and copious language in the world, would

* Chudder, literally a sheet.

have been similarly struck to find grammatical Arabic lisped from the mouths of babes; and Persian, soft, harmonious Persian, flowing sweetly from a girlish voice, and sounding as if it should be "writ on satin." With myself they chatted in the harsher Hindostanee, a language fit only to be spoken to a slave, being full of authority and command, brief and uncourteous.

I am now, however, speaking somewhat ungratefully of the means by which I acquired a great deal of interesting information from my amiable companions, on the manners of their people. The bride, more particularly, gave me a distinct account of the ceremonies observed at her late marriage, which to me were quite novel.

It appears that a youth desiring to form a union with one of the fair daughters of his tribe, consults his mother on the occasion, who, deciding on the maiden she prefers among her acquaintance, refers to the parents for their consent. This ob-

tained, she formally invites her female friends to accompany her to the nomination of her son's betrothed. The intended bride, being duly acquainted with the time of the expected visit, is found seated on a rich cushion, closely veiled, her hands and feet dyed with henna, and surrounded by a group of Jewish maidens. The mother of her suitor, after a fitting conversation, presents her with a costly ring, as the act of betrothment; the women then join in singing the praises of the bride, and engage in mirth and festivity until the morrow.

When the period arrives for the celebration of the marriage, a curtain is drawn across the principal apartment in the house of the bride's father, on one side of which the lady is seated, with her female relatives and friends, and on the other, the bridegroom, with the priest of the synagogue, and the male relatives of both families. A rabbi then fills a cup with wine, and drops into it metals of three kinds, copper, silver, and gold. The bridegroom, after drinking

a portion of it, returns the cup to the priest; it is then carried to the bride, who, after draining the contents, throws the vessel upon the ground. When the bride, at the conclusion of this ceremony, is about to quit the apartment, a goat is slain at the threshold, and the nuptial party step over it in rotation; as the bride herself passes, a cake of unleavened bread is broken over her head, and the fragments divided among the relatives. Nuptial festivities are continued for seven days; and on the eighth a feast is given, to which the priest, relatives, and friends, are generally invited. At its conclusion, every guest offers a trifling gift of money or jewels to the rabbi, who, as he accepts each, repeats aloud the name of the donor, which is received with a general cheer. An epithalamium is then sung, and the marriage is complete.

Before leaving the residence of our Jewish friends, we encountered some of the gentlemen of the family; tall, fair,

handsome persons, with rich vests and turbans, and flowing beards descending midway to their girdles. They stood aside, and saluted us courteously as we passed; but looked as if it would have been a breach of etiquette, to address my companion without the bounds of the private apartments, more particularly in the presence of a stranger.

The Armenian population is far more considerable in Calcutta than Bombay. From a late census, the number of Armenian inhabitants of the city of palaces, aggregated to four hundred and eighty;* while in the presidency of Western India their number is comparatively trifling. The merchant residents are chiefly emi-

* I allude to a census taken by Mr. Gentlùm Aviet, in the year 1814. Since which time, according to Johannes Avdall, Esquire, an addition to the Armenian population has been made of only twenty-five individuals, in a period of twenty-six years.—See "Census of the Armenian Population of the City of Calcutta, in the year 1837."

grants from Bushire or Bussorah, trafficking in stuffs and gems; some deal largely in horses, and amass considerable wealth. There is only one church in the fort belonging to the Armenians, but their priests are held in very high respect.

The Armenian gentlemen wear the Persian dress, and dye both their hair and whiskers with the favourite henna. This artificial disfiguration is common in the east; arising, probably, from the universality of the natural tint being thought unpleasing. Whether, therefore, it is the orange tawny, or "the purple in grain" which may be selected, the hair, beard, or moustache of an Asiatic coxcomb is seldom to be seen of its natural hue.

The dress of the Armenian ladies is costly, and consists of a velvet robe and stomacher, stiff with gold, seed pearls, or gems.

The gorgeous "Cambara," or headdress, is a tiara of fine gold, richly set with small, but precious stones. A hand-

kerchief of exquisite texture, edged with gold, is thrown over the head, and wrapped across below the chin, where it meets a red silk net, worn as a circular tippet. A handsome cambara being worth about five hundred guineas, it is valued as hereditary property in an Armenian family, and is eminently becoming to a handsome countenance.

The Armenian ladies pass their time, either engaged in the care of their families, in receiving or paying visits, drinking coffee or sherbet, embroidering, and making delicious confections of Hulwah and various sweetmeats. They have very considerable influence in their families, understand business admirably, and are commonly entrusted with the full control of their own property. Their condition is easy and agreeable, little restraint being placed upon their conduct; a slight degree of personal seclusion being considered honourable and dignified.

In speaking of the Parsees, Jews, and

Armenians, only, as foreign settlers in Bombay, it will be supposed that this classification includes but a small proportion of such emigrating Asiatics, as have selected the Presidency of Western India for the scene of their speculations. Others, however, are not sufficiently numerous to form distinct classes, being scattered among the social community, rather under the character of individual adventurers, than merchant settlers.

Nations and individuals equally seek expedients to increase their comforts and possessions. The settlers of India have more particularly undergone mutation from this cause, its commodities having offered unusually rich and attractive baits to commercial enterprize. In addition to an overflow of Asiatic sojourners, the inhabitants of the western hemisphere have, from the earliest period, looked with a longing hope towards the rich shores of India, and struggled among themselves for mercantile supremacy. The Portuguese

discoverers of the southern coasts of Western India had not long to enjoy the undisputed advantages of their commercial enterprise. English ambition was aroused; but failing in her first efforts, Russia and Turkey dispatched their agents to the Persian Gulf, and the Dutch commenced their systems of monopoly, until more formidably opposed by the British, who were again threatened by the growing power of the French, in their settlements on the coast of Coromandel.*

Few subjects afford more interesting material for reflection, than the changes which have thus, at various eras, affected the condition of Western India. It would seem impossible to review, or reason on

* In 1558, an agent from Russia made a port in the Persian Gulf for the purpose of trading in Indian commodities. In 1590, merchants from the Levant penetrated into India with a similar object; and five years afterwards were followed by the Dutch; whose example was shortly imitated by the French, establishing themselves at Pondicherry.

the circumstances which attended our own immediate possession of the country, with apathy or indifference. On history's page the name of Britain has eclipsed that of every other nation for whom India once poured forth her wealth, and the inhabitants of that fair land look to us alone for the protection of her truest interests.

CHAPTER V.

NATIVE AND EUROPEAN SOLDIERY.

"I have served him
In this old body."

OTWAY.

THE Horseguard regulations uphold the system of arraying all our foreign troops after the English model; still it would seem impossible to see the finely-made Sepoy of a native regiment in the simple but exquisitely graceful dress of his country, without lamenting the etiquette of toilette he is constrained to observe in conformance with our military mandate. The regiments of Western India are principally supplied from the Deckan; and the Mah-

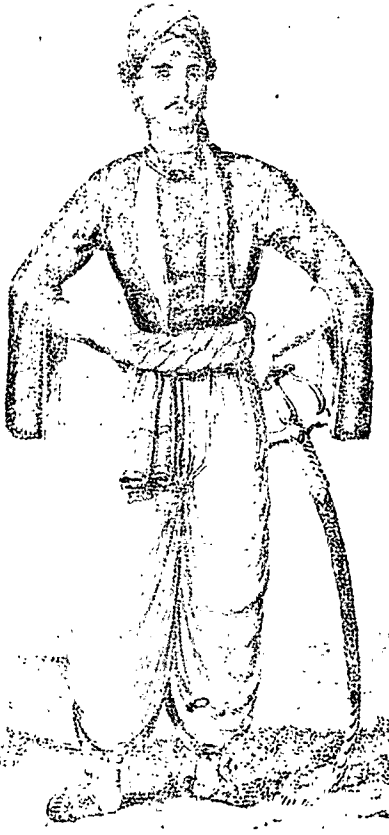
rattas are conspicuously handsome and powerful men. In speaking of mere costume, however, that of a Hindostan sepoy is most particularly distinguished for its beautiful and picturesque effect. The complexion of these men is unusually fair for Asiatics; and their figures seem cast in the most symmetrical of nature's moulds.

The easy grace with which the tasteful attire of the Indian soldier is worn, is combined with an inexpressible dignity of manner, indicative of high caste, and produced by a train of conscious satisfactions, and well recognised distinctions, influencing the native mind. When, however, the silken ankrika, with its pendant sleeves, the well draped doputta, and the graceful turban is laid aside for the uniform of a mercenary in the British service, the character of the sepoy appears to undergo a change, and his general aspect becomes that of a constrained automaton, moving in a state of passive indifference to all that concerns his family, his country, and himself.

A comparison will readily suggest the idea, that the full equipment of our English military dress must prove a severe infliction of discomfort to the native soldier, being equally ill suited to his habits, his physical structure, and the climate in which he serves. Not the least inconvenience to the sepoy, however, is that of being compelled, in conjunction with red coats, stocks, and belts, to adopt our heavy shoes, in exchange for the light, easy, Egyptian-looking sandal.

The thick heels and strong leather hurt and encumber their feet, and thus totally destroy the graceful bearing and confirmed step, for which natives of good caste are eminently remarkable.

When the thermometer rises to 110°, the red coat is, by a merciful dispensation, exchanged for one of a similar form, made of white long cloth; but the belt, the stock, and the cap remain; and the poor fellows can scarcely rejoice in the intended benefit, from the labour it costs to keep



their snowy vesture unstained, or to restore its original purity. The sepoy is his own washerman; and as the wells, or probably a river, may be situated at some distance from the regimental lines, the ablutory process forms both a troublesome and fatiguing accession of daily duty.

Without asserting, as a general remark, that the Hindoos are eminently a vain people, it is certain that few can be more addicted to the cares of the toilette, considering the little stimulus their social manners seem to offer for any very scrupulous attention to personal adornment. The salutary practice of frequent ablution is a religious duty necessary to be observed; but in extension of personal cleanliness, every sepoy provides himself with a small mirror, which forms a lining in the lid of a little circular case, always carried about his person. I have been frequently amused at observing an "orderly" seat himself under the verandah of a bungalow, (to whose occupant he may have been sent on

regimental business,) deliberately remove his cap, draw out this little mirror, and gravely suffering about a yard of coarse black hair to escape, commence the task of replaiting it, turning his head about with a most amusing anxiety for the becoming. Not satisfied with a plait and a back comb, a sepoy usually extends the decorative principle to his front hair also, and twists it up into three or four rouleau curls, certainly not in accordance with the last regulations for military coiffer.*

As the native troops have not barracks assigned them, on arriving at a station they either erect little mud huts for themselves, or occupy such as may be vacated by the regiment they succeed. The native officers live in the lines with the men, and the only distinction in their dwellings is,

* This custom of allowing the hair to grow, and gathering it into a knot, seems to have been common to ancient nations, and far from being deemed unmanly; the practice is alluded to by Martial, Seneca, and Tacitus.

that the officer has a larger hut, an extra window, and probably a few more flowering creepers upon its roof. In the neighbourhood of these primitive and temporary abodes, a few tulsi, and other sacred trees, are carefully walled round; the sepoys decorate them with a little flag, and considering each as a sort of protecting Penates, watch and tend them with very constant care. It is pleasant to pass the sepoy lines during the evening ride, and to see the bright wood fires briskly burning, the men in their graceful and snowy undress, baking their badjeree cake for the family meal, or playing with the little urchin "logue," in quiet and domestic enjoyment.

It is customary for the sepoys in cantonment, to make morning and evening reports to their European officers, on the state of the pickets, fort, church, or other public buildings to which a guard is allowed. This is done in a garbled mixture of Hindostanee and English, which is fre-

quently amusing. To the military phrase of "all well," they attach considerable consequence, and not uncommonly affix it to reports, the gist of which is any thing *but* well. An anecdote will serve to illustrate this, of a native sentry on duty, in one of the bastions of the fort of Anjar in Cutch, during the first shock of the earthquake of 1819. The tower fell, and the unfortunate sentry was precipitated to the ground; hastily picking up his musket, the man ran trembling to the officer in charge, and with a face of the utmost consternation, reported the accident in these terms: "Sahib, boojraj gir purrah; boojraj all well." (The tower has fallen down; the tower is "all well.") The sentry's challenge given in English, and the return "friend," is blurted out in a stentorian voice, by every native who passes a cantonment picket after nightfall.

The sepoys are well drilled, and at a review, or on parade, do not suffer much by a comparison with our British troops.

I remember to have particularly remarked this at Poonah, on an occasion of the presentation of colours to the European regiment, when the fourth dragoons and several regiments of artillery were also present. The native troops looked well, marched well, and played their part in the military spectacle with admirable precision; while the humbled city of the Peishwah in the distance, and the gilded domes of Parbuttee, served to recall vivid recollections of the gallant and intrepid manner with which the sepoys defended our power in the Deckan, and made good our possessions, even against the prince of their own people. In those times, the value of the native troops was well understood; and Sir Arthur Wellesley has yielded a just and well earned tribute to their bravery, fidelity, and good discipline. The good conduct of the sepoys, has not only proved eminently valuable when opposed to their own countrymen; but it will be remembered, that we have never hesitated to bring them into the field against foreign

enemies, even against the French tactitions, and their well drilled army, whom, on one occasion, the native troops succeeded in worsting, after our other soldiery had been repeatedly driven back.

These remarks are not by any means intended as an attempted equalization of the military capacity, or physical power of British and Indian troops; but simply to prove, that considering his duties, his position, and the possessions he defends, the sepoy is most valuable, and deserves the highest encouragement and consideration which a liberal government can possibly award him. Too much indeed, cannot, I think, be said in support of the interests of our native troops, who, however apathetic they may appear in the monotonous discharge of mere garrison duty, have, on occasions of urgent necessity, behaved with a bravery, fidelity and unmurmuring endurance of hunger and fatigue, worthy our best opinion; but which, it is to be regretted, is seldom justly lauded, unless when such emergencies arise.

If our preservation of the empire of India, is to depend on military occupation, it must of course be our best interest to render our military establishment as efficient as possible. The condition of the native soldiers should be as much improved, as their position will admit; while kindly consideration, and judicious reward, should be used to attach them to the British interest.

In any service to which he may be called, the native soldier displays cheerful alacrity in the discharge of his duties; but as our dominion encreases, the more imperative does it become, to secure and improve his allegiance: and it is only by a constant attention to the interests of our sepoys, that we can hope to retain the services of troops, whose fidelity, even if simply noted with reference to the scenes now enacting on our north western frontier, is an undying monument to their credit and their fame.

The necessity demanding it, we hesitate

not to embark the native soldier on board our crowded transports, and convey him far from his anxious family, on dangerous and distant service. The dread attending such a fate, (for as an affair of "Nuseeb," it is universally considered) is greater than can be imagined by those unacquainted with the religious prejudices of the Hindoo people; according to the institute of his sacred books, a Hindoo is forbidden to leave the country of his religion, and the men now triumphantly traversing the disputed plains of Kandahar and Caubul, must pass the interdicted line of Attok,* beyond which, religiously speaking, he is not permitted to pass. An officer, at present engaged in the campaign of the Indus, has afforded evidence on this subject, which I shall not apologize for introducing, inasmuch as the information is instructive and valuable, and calculated moreover, to interest our feelings in the cheerful obedience of the too frequently

* Literally *forbidden*.

depreciated sepoy. This writer observes, in speaking of the miseries endured by the marching soldier: "On board ships, moreover, the Hindoo is subject to privations beyond ordinary endurance; at the same time, that his most cherished prejudices of religion and caste are continually outraged and infringed. The high caste native cannot cook his usual meal in a spot where animal life is continually destroyed, and where, moreover, even the flesh of the sacred cow is used as daily food. Breathing an atmosphere redolent of most abhorred pollution, whilst thus brought into contact with all that is impure, the Hindoo virtually exists in a condition sufficient to expel him from al caste, and which to contemplate calmly, would be worse than death to those who obey the injunctions of a religion, exacting rigid attention to its external ordinances.

"Notwithstanding this, and with only a few grains of dry and uncooked pulse to

support him, I have seen the very Brahmins in the sepoy ranks, cheerful and light hearted, to a degree which quite astonished me. One of our party, a fine young Hindostan Brahmin, particularly attracted our attention; seated on the rattlins, he sang from morning until night, of the sunny banks of the Jumna, of Krishna's amorous adventures, or of the fair plains of Hindostan, which he scarcely dared hope ever to see again. At length, wearied with the monotony of the deck, he scaled the rigging, to the infinite amusement of his companions, and seating himself on the cross trees of the mainmast, made the whole ship resound with his melody; a Brahmin in such a situation, appeared singularly incongruous. Some slight idea may be formed of what our native troops are doomed to suffer, when it is related, that on board the steamers carrying each a regiment, the men were so closely packed, as only to admit of their sleeping in a sitting posture, the paddle

boxes, and every corner being crowded. An officer related to me, that after witnessing for three days *extreme* suffering in this way, he was surprised at hearing many *jokes* which were bandied about among the sepoys, springing from the occasion. "Aree bhae, toom kahan jute ho," (Halloo! comrade, where are you going?) said a Hindostan man to his neighbour, who was in vain attempting to move from his cramped position. "Bhae, muen, to dure ne jata hoon," (Comrade, I am not going far,)—indeed the poor fellow's knees were so swelled, that he was hardly able to move, yet was the circumstance made but a matter for merriment! The fact is, after having once embarked, the willing native soldier abandons himself to fate, and whether you take him to Portsmouth, or the mouths of the Indus, he consoles himself, and satisfies all scruples by the simple phrase, "Sirkar ka hookum," (it is the pleasure of government). "I have eaten the Sirka's salt for some years; I must not complain

when I am called on to do the *Nokari*, (service)." The most proximate cause of the native soldier's fidelity to the government he serves, is undoubtedly the regularity of its military payments. Yet rewards of distinction, and the flattering prizes of well-merited approval, is a method always efficient to conciliate and delight the faithful sepoy. It might eventually become the interest of the Russian and Persian governments to offer higher briberies for the service of these valuable troops, than their present masters have considered it expedient to do; and ere the success of such a plan is tried, it would be well, firmly to attach the native soldiers, before their fidelity is shaken by any speculative attacks, whose results might be at least to engender discontent, and arouse the dangerous opinion, of the value of the British service being materially on the wane.

It has been objected to by some, that the differences of religious opinion between European officers, and the native soldiery,

tends to create a barrier between them, and prohibits those feelings of attachment and respect which should always exist in the minds of the soldier towards his immediate commander. I am inclined to believe this opinion to have been inferred, rather from a knowledge of the differences which exist in the social customs of Europeans and Asiatics, than from personal observation, or an acquaintance with native peculiarities.

The knowledge the sepoys of a regiment acquire, concerning the character of their British officers, is remarkable for its accuracy and justness. An amiable, respectable man, is universally esteemed; in proof of which, they request his assistance in difficulties, make him their referee in cases of dispute among themselves, invite him to their festivals, and treat him on all occasions, with that sort of confiding respect, which is, perhaps, of all others, the most becoming feeling they can possibly display towards the representatives of a power acknowledged as the native soldier's best protection.

An instance of personal attachment from a company of sepoys, to an officer of their corps, came under my observation only a short time since, and is worth relating, as its sincerity was proved, by overcoming one of the most powerful prejudices connected with the Brahminical code. It is well known, that none but outcaste Hindus, men who are compelled to live outside the cities, and whose very shadow is held as pollution by one of the priestly order, will come in contact with a corpse, or prepare it for interment. An officer of the 15th N. I., a remarkably amiable and religious man, whose character was well known, and justly appreciated, died of fever soon after his return to the regiment, after an absence of two years on sick certificate. On his death being known, the sepoys of the 15th, men of high caste, went to his house, entreating permission to see him; their request complied with, several remained with the corpse, prepared it for interment, and finally bore the coffin,

first to the church, and afterwards to the grave. Many similar instances of strong personal attachment between the sepoys and their European officers, are on record, but none more touching than the one I have now mentioned, which affords a strong illustration of the affectionate respect of men, the most prejudiced in the world.* It is an error to suppose, that the Hindus admire any man who displays an indifference to his own religion, or a laxity of moral conduct, even in such particulars as with their own people are considered very venial solecisms in social ethics: such an individual, on the contrary, is treated and spoken of most slightingly, while a really religious, moral, and upright man, secures their respect and good opinion. Nothing can be more easy and agreeable than the command of native troops; their habits are simple, and their manners gentle and sub-

* It is not uncommon for sepoys to burn lights on the grave of an officer whose memory they respect; to crown it with flowers at their festivals, and salute it with military observance.

ordinate. The regimental lines are quiet and orderly, the dwellings clean, the women and children peaceable and unobtrusive.

On the promotion of a sepoy, he makes it a point of duty to call at the bungalows of his European officers, to make his salaams, and I know no class of men on whom encouragement, and the approbation of his superiors, has a greater effect, than on the native soldier. When length of service and good conduct, entitles a sepoy to his retiring pension, his chief delight is in recounting the campaigns he may have served in, and relating anecdotes of his European commanders. An indulgence in such reminiscences, is the prerogative of an old soldier, all over the world, and whether he is seated in the porch of a little public house on the way side, in the sweet scenes of an English summer, or at the door of his hut on the burning plains of Hindostan, ready listeners are ever to be found,

"Pleased with that social, sweet garrulity,
The poor disbanded vet'rau's sole delight."

In these recollections, the sepoy displays remarkable acuteness in his knowledge of the character, and the motives of those under whom he has served, and frequently descants on private circumstances affecting the rectitude of his superiors, in a manner which, once heard, should serve as a constant check to every species of irregularity, when it is considered how much the private conduct of individuals must tend to uphold or decrease the respect of the natives of India for the British character. In speaking of an officer, the sepoys will say, "He is a *good* man, but illiberal, (pucka) and very passionate; (goosah wallah). In this sense, the term *good* signifies intelligent, and well acquainted with the social manners and prejudices of the people: also, that the individual in question, in his intercourse with natives, is governed by such observances as are agreeable to their prejudices and feelings.

It has been said, and by one well acquainted with India, that the European

character, and its influence on public opinion, is one of the chief pillars of our government in the east. Knowing the shrewdness of native observation, it becomes part of the duty which every man owes to the nation he serves, to support the interests of his country, and exalt the British character, by his own rectitude of conduct, to that eminence of purity and strength, which will justly excite the admiration and respect of those, whose fidelity is our only safeguard. Surely nothing but the grossest ignorance of native intelligence, can form an apology for the offensive acts which are constantly committed by young officers on their first arrival in India; and it becomes a subject for serious regret, that the power which is vested in mere boys, should seem to authorise the commission of such outrages on the feelings and prejudices of those around them. While any community remain in a state of national ignorance, nothing can be more dangerously unwise, than any attempt to

treat lightly, that which is dearer to the people than even liberty itself. The prejudices of the natives of India, have become venerable from their antiquity; and forming as they do, the great frame-work of social manners, afford most interesting data to the philosophical enquirer into the history and progress of the human mind, in the earliest stages of its development.

Many of the sepoys are Brahmins of high caste, and late in the evening may be heard chaunting, in full chorus, passages from the Bhagavàt, a lyric poem, containing a prolix account of the life of the god Crishna, a wild narrative, varied by poetical decoration.

It is customary for the native soldiers to obtain leave of absence, for the purpose of performing pilgrimages to the shrines of particular saints, and it becomes frequently amusing, to note the contrast between the penitential dress, and the military bearing of these covenanted devotees. A short time since, a sepoy of the 16th N. I. passed

through Cutch, on his way to Hinglaz.* He brought with him a pass note for the several stations through which he had been constrained to travel in journeying from the Deckan, and was attired in the usual dress of a devotee: an orange tawny turban and dhoputta, and his bare throat encircled with huge beads carved from the Tulsi tree. This soldier-pilgrim was, at the time, en route; but soon after his appearance, a sepoy returned from Hinglaz, having lost his pass note on the way. So completely had the toils and objects of his journey deprived this poor man of the characteristic distinctions of military appearance, and exchanged them for those of a wandering fakir, that his story was not readily believed, and on his making an application at the military pay office, for a

* Hinglaz is near the sea, about eighty miles from the mouth of the Indus. As a place of Hindoo pilgrimage, it is little visited, from the difficulties which attend the journey, when made from most parts of Hindostan. It is said, however, to contain twenty-four temples of Bhavani, the Indian Venus.

sufficient advance to enable him to rejoin his regiment, the whole was considered a trick worthy the most cunning of the saintly fraternity. Truly, appearances were against him; he presented himself nearly in a state of nudity, his body smeared with chalk and ashes, wooden beads and amulets about his neck, his long hair plastered and matted together on his shoulders, and a bunch of peacock's feathers upon his head. Without clothes or money, a staff and a water gourd formed his only possessions. The poor man had evidently suffered much, and proved to be, as he stated, a sepoy in the company's service, on leave of absence from his corps. Not finding, in the first instance, very ready credence to his story, the man requested to be put through his facings, and it was truly pitiable to see this infatuated being, in dust and ashes, perform his military evolutions.

The attempt to reason with a sepoy on the useless misery and danger to which these pilgrimages expose him, would be an

experiment entailing considerable hazard. Uninstructed on all principles of loyalty, the troops are yet attached to the British service, since they derive from it a better provision than could be secured to them from the native princes, who are commonly faithless, both in their time and manner of payment. These advantages of mere interest, however, would have little weight, should their prejudices be assailed, and speedily indeed would our power in India be defied, were we mad enough to interfere with the religious rights of the native soldiery.

The children of the sepoys attend a regimental school; and a hospital for their use, is to be found at every station, under the care and superintendence of a regimental surgeon. The native patients readily submit to treatment, and seem grateful for the attentions paid. The sons of sepoys are employed as orderlies, and little fellows of eight years old, display a degree of sharpness in their duties, and an aptitude

in learning their drill, peculiar to the precocity of Asiatic children.

It is impossible to observe native and European troops stationed together in India, without remarking on the superior adaptation of the sepoy, to the position he occupies. Contented with his daily fare of grain, pulse, and water, quiet in his lines, submissive and respectful to his superiors, he forms a strong contrast to the European soldier, who, unhappily, indulges in every dissipation calculated to enervate and undermine his constitution, and utterly deprave his moral character. Drunkenness, discontent, and insubordination, are common among them; the women are immoral and quarrelsome, while the men act with a reckless daring of evil consequences, and a besotted indifference to life, which, without reference to the circumstances inducing it, would appear almost incredible.

Although plentifully supplied with the best food, allowed liquor of excellent

quality, from the regimental canteen, and aware, from the example of many victims, of the evils attending excess, in a climate such as India; influence and authority prove equally inefficient to check in its career, the dangerous dissipation of our European troops. During seasons most unhealthy, when the pestilence which walketh at noon-day, has been around their steps, Bazaar coolies have been seized, carrying vessels filled with native spirits to the barracks, bribed to the illicit duty, by these unfortunate self-destroyers. The soldiers' wives, not content with frequent libations of raw arrack, boil in it spices and green chilis, to increase its potency, giving smaller potions of the deleterious compound to their children, who are seen rolling in dirt and squalor about the lines, exposed to the deadly influences of a tropic sun.

A lamentable instance of the wanton indifference with which European soldiers will rush towards that destruction which waits for them as "an armed man," oc-

curred about two years since, in the province of Cutch, when a monsoon of unusual length produced violent and innumerable cases of fever, both among the European and native population.

With the exception of eight men, the full complement of a company of European artillery were in hospital; the native medical attendants were attacked, and two out of the three assistant surgeons at the station. For many days, one or other of the hospital patients fell victims to the terrible disease; and evening after evening, the few of their comrades who remained, were ordered to form the funeral party, and fire the last rounds over their companions' graves. This sad duty was insufficient to make these unfortunate beings wise unto their own safety, and two among those who had escaped the fearful visitation, were carried to the hospital under the fatal and self-produced horrors of delirium tremens!

The heartless indifference, with which the wives of these men think and speak

of the conduct and probable fate of their husbands, is indeed sad. Deaths are too frequent among them to make much impression; they consider it with the same apathy that a Hindoo would talk of an affair of "Nuseeb," (destiny) and speedily merging the remembrance of the past, in an anxiety for a fresh union, haste to "furnish forth the marriage tables." During the season above alluded to, a gunner who died of fever in the hospital, left a widow, somewhat distinguished for her personal comeliness. An hour after her husband's death, three of his comrades proposed to her, and before a week expired, her weeds were laid aside. The woman's second husband also died, and she again married with similar promptness. A third time, death severed, and Hymen retied the mystic knot; and last of all, but again a widow, "the woman died also."

These speedy remarriages are far from uncommon; frequent cases occur, in which

a wife engages herself to a suitor during her husband's life, and trusts to the chances provided by arrack and climate, for the fulfillment of her contract. Disproportion in age, is never considered in a soldier's marriage; a grisly bombardier of forty, unites himself to a girl of twelve, with the full consent of her parents, who are probably present at the marriage.

In remarking on the irregularities and vices of soldiers' wives in India, it is only just to notice the temptations, restraints, and miseries, to which this class of women are subject, in a country so little calculated to cherish their better feelings, or to provide them with necessary occupation, or common comfort. Unable, from extreme heat, to move out of the little room allotted to them in the "married men's quarter's," during the day, and provided, for two rupees a month, with a Portuguese "cook boy," who relieves them from the toil of domestic duties, the only resource of the soldiers' wives is in mischievous asso-

ciations, discontented murmurings, and habits of dissipated indulgence. Strolling in the evening through the dirty bazaars of a native town, probably under the auspices of an ayah, who may have picked up a smattering of the English language, these unhappy women purchase liquor, to conciliate their careless husbands. On returning late to the barracks, the truant wife frequently finds her partner already in a state of intoxication; mutual recrimination follows, and then succeeds a scene for which we may well weep, that humanity has such. But alas! these brutalities are common; and knowing them as we do, can society marvel, that with such circumstances around her, the European woman in India becomes their victim, or falls into the practice of that dishonesty, drunkenness, and debauchery, for which she is so commonly and so severely upbraided.

The proximate causes of the conduct of European soldiers, may be readily disco-

vered in the peculiarity of the position in which they are placed in India, and its unsuitability to their general habits. During the heat of the day, a soldier has no resource but to loll upon a bench in the barrack room, endeavouring to kill time between breakfast and dinner; and again until sunset, smoking, whistling, or sleeping. The sultry heat induces perpetual thirst, and the neighbouring canteen offers relief in its most tempting form; unfortunately, a European soldier's allowance of liquor, is much greater than is requisite for health in a tropical climate; and being allowed also, to purchase from the canteen, to a certain amount, in addition to what is privately procured against orders, by means of native agency, the poor fellows rapidly become the victims of a habit, as pernicious as it is powerful. The more thirst is indulged in a tropical climate, the more urgent do its demands become, and the greater the power of the exciting stimulants, which are applied to rouse the phy-

sical energies, the more rapid is their decay. With the knowledge of these facts before the world, European soldiers are yet permitted to live in the tropics, as if serving among the ague inducing bogs of Ireland, notwithstanding the evils of the spirit system are daily attested, by the death of many of our finest men, while the mortality is obstinately referred to the effects of *climate*, instead of meeting its corrective in the measured prohibition of drams, and the introduction of resources calculated to afford occupation and improvement to the soldier, during the hours he is constrained to pass in the confinement of the barrack room.

To men long accustomed to the use of powerful stimulants, the total temperance system would neither be a well received, or salutary measure, to be introduced among the British troops serving in the east; but a reduction in the government allowance of arrack, might be compounded for, by the introduction of good beer into the

canteen stores; which would prove more wholesome, and far better calculated to allay suffering from heat, and excessive thirst. Unfortunately, very deleterious spirits, of a strength considerably greater than arrack, are distilled in all native villages, from several vegetable productions of common growth; being low priced, the soldiers eagerly purchase these compounds, and despite the strictest regulations, privately consume an immense quantity.

That spirituous liquors are at all required in India, is a fallacious opinion, disproved by daily experience; among European officers, their use is almost discontinued, and the mortality in consequence materially lessened. The brandy pani drinkers of old, men who called for tumblers of the stimulating mixture at ten A.M., and continued them during the day, are now among the characters which belong to the legendary lore of other days; and the change has given rise to

those arrangements for retiring funds, and other supports of personal interest, which are so eminently required, to balance that lack of promotion throughout the company's service, resulting from peace, temperance, and "pale ale."

The sepoy finds sufficient stimulus in the aromatic spices with which nature, "best knowing what is good for man," has so bountifully supplied his country; and it is recorded by the accomplished annalist of the services of Lord Clive, that the native soldiers fought bravely upon a diet of Congee,* themselves requesting that the rice might be set aside, for the nourishment of the European troops.

Without falling into extremes, which would probably exercise a very baneful effect on constitutions unprepared for the change, were measures adopted by which the British soldier, serving in the east, could be induced to assimilate with his own, a few of the simpler habits of the

* The water in which rice is boiled.

sepoy, sobriety and temperance might secure many unhappy beings from the casualities now so common among this portion of our troops, and leave fewer victims of disease, who, after a lengthened exile, return to their native land but to crowd the hospitals of a military depôt, miserable in themselves, useless and expensive to the government they serve.

CHAPTER VI.

GORA BUNDER, AND BASSEIN.

THE RIVER AND THE CITY.

"No voice, no sound, no whispers intervene
To break the intense, deep stillness of the scene,
Save where the mouldering column's crumbling sound
A momentary echo strikes around."

ANONYMOUS.

THE neighbourhood of Bombay comprises very many spots of exquisite and uncommon beauty. Among those eminently deserving remark, yet comparatively little known, is the ancient and desolate city of Bassein, situated about thirty miles from the presidency, on the Gora Bunder river. It being considered good taste for the residents of Bombay to rusticate

during the Christmas festival, we availed ourselves of the invitation of some friends, to devote the period to an admiring investigation of the natural beauties of the river, and the curious architectural remains of the city of Bassein.

Our immediate party was deemed abundant ballast for a Bombay bundah boat; consequently the marching furniture, or *kit*, as it is more commonly termed, chair, bed and table, cooking vessels, and tents, were consigned, some to the dangers of an overland journey, and others to one of the crazy harbour flotilla, to follow over the dancing waves as speedily as they might. The wind blew fresh, and our turbaned crew, with trembling precaution, hasted to save their canvass; but these trim craft, built especially for harbour service, sail well when close hauled, and buffet admirably on their way, even against the heaviest seas.

Early on the morning following our departure, the little bark arrived in safety

at the mouth of the Gora Bunder river; and the bright and gladdening sun-light, falling in its golden splendor on the lovely scene around, afforded enchanting successions of exquisite panoramic views, whose features, sometimes bold and picturesque, again blended sweetly in a landscape, all luxuriant, soft, and glowing.

The Gora Bunder river flows between lofty hills, beautifully wooded, and studded here and there with antique ruins, and huge masses of dark rock, whose kindred and fantastic forms, fringed with luxuriant creepers, start from amid the rich and glossy underwood, deceiving the eye with fanciful resemblances to ruined towers and tottering battlements, while the graceful bamboo, crowned with tasselled creepers, form vegetating arches of brilliant blossoms, decorating the river's banks, and bending as if to woo its sparkling waters. Above the landing place, embedded among the summits of luxuriant and lofty trees, is an age-stained and many turretted

monastery, to the foot of which, by a narrow, wooded, and rocky pass, we wound our way. Arrived at the level ground, an open space was decorated with a group of snowy tents; ever a pleasant sight, to the travel stained, and weary traveller. India is indeed a country of contrivance; and the more particularly is the impression of this fact conveyed, when the traveller leaves his comfortable domicile, to enjoy the liberty of a jungle life, and mark the curious features of a novel scene. Arrived at his first *mucam* (halting place), he finds no inn where smiling hostess affords her readiest welcome; but a canvass home, fitted with all the conveniences of his forsaken dwelling. A double poled tent forms a commodious dining room; the marching cots are placed in a smaller one beyond it, while the humble bechober is laid out with bath, and toilette table; and the attendant servants, in a routie apart, make the necessary preparations for the approaching meal. The doors of the large

tents open into each other; carpets spread over the well swept ground, give an air of comfort to the whole; and green checs suspended to the outer door, shade from the eye the glare of the neighbouring soil. The blue and sunny sky seems to woo man to become a wanderer, while it also renders the necessary provisions for his comfort, of easy and rapid acquirement. A sojourner in the quiet residences of old England, has but a vague idea of the way of life of half his species; wretched indeed does he fancy the erratic tribes must inevitably be, living under dark canvass, in the wide and sterile desert; and little can he imagine the domestic comforts of the patriarchal tribes, dwelling in pastoral liberty within their tented homes. The traveller in the east soon learns, however, that man in every clime is never so ignorant, or so helpless, but he can originate devices of comfort for himself; and whether he dwells in a wigwam on the banks of the Ohio, in a wandh on the

great Desert of the Thurr, in a tent in Arabia Felix, or a mansion in Grosvenor Square, he yet surrounds himself with all that most ministers to his wants and comforts; and the uncivilized wanderer is as *kôsh*,* smoking his chillum in the one, as the man of refinement can possibly be, quaffing his champaigne at a ministerial dinner party in the other.

The Portuguese monastery of Gora Bunder has been fitted with a Mahommedan dome. It contains several excellent apartments, lighted by large windows, barred with wood, and commanding magnificent views of the surrounding scenery. On one side may be observed the picturesque windings of the beautiful and placid river, its rocks, and trees, and mountain scenery; while on the other, a wide plain, covered with fine plantations of rice and sugar cane, stretches away to a considerable distance, where the

* Kôsh, an expressive Persian term, signifying unusual comfort.

river, forming a natural boundary on the one side, on the other washes the extensive walls of the city of Bassein.

A Parsee tower, and trifling ruins of cloistered avenues, are scattered about the uneven ground on which the monastery stands: while the rich and tangled underwood, flourishing in wild luxuriance among the massy rocks, affords shelter to innumerable sojourners of the tiger and serpent class, who find abundant lairs in the fastnesses of such a home.

The neighbouring trees equally protect the feathered tribes; the king-fisher, with azure wing and crimson beak; the mangoe bird, gay in orange colored plumage; the small and pretty paroquet, which from its sunny brightness is not readily distinguished among the fluttering leaves; the pheasant of Malabar, gorgeous as a reflected rainbow; all are numerous on this spot, while the bulbul makes the solitude melodious with his lay, and the coy coppersmith, the feathered ventriloquist of its

native woods, leads the inquisitive listener from tree to tree, defying observation.

The Gora Bunder river abounds with alligators, and otters. The alligators, with their enormous jaws extended, lie like wooden logs perdue on the banks of mud skirting the water's edge; and appear to possess the power of fascination, on any unfortunate victim, which, calculated to form their prey, ventures unhappily in their immediate neighbourhood. Some of the sportsmen of our party essayed to bribe the cayman, after the manner of Mr. Waterton; but the effort was unsuccessful; neither were their numerous rifle shots more telling; the creatures, with a sonorous roar, floundering away, and making good their retreat, among the underwood of the neighbouring jungle, whenever startled by these offensive acts.

The city of Bassein has been long forsaken; a few fishermen and shikarries, alone occupy a spot once replete with luxury and power, and still containing

magnificent evidences of taste, in the application of great and national wealth. The market place, cloisters, and churches, are in a state of ruin and desolation, embedded in rich verdure, and garlanded with parasitical plants, hastening their decay. Silence reigns amid the wreck which time has wrought, and the traveller's step falls heavily on the ear, as long unwakened echoes startle the owl and the lizard from their resting place, and excite the defensive ire of the half slumbering and gorgeous cobra.

The city contains about eight churches, of considerable size, and great architectural beauty; their square towers and ruined galleries surmount the dense masses of foliage which shade the lower portions of the buildings, and from every point of view which the traveller can select, present exquisite studies for graphic delineation.

But thirty years have elapsed since the city of Bassein was inhabited; and still in one church, the human sympathies of the

observer may be excited, by the whitened remnants of mortality exposed in an open grave, doubtless desecrated, from the opinion commonly received among the natives, that individuals blessed with the goods of fortune, often, with selfish anxiety, desire that their treasure should, rather than pass to other hands, be deposited with themselves, where corruption hastens unto dust. This is, indeed, frequently the case; and, perhaps, after a lapse of ages, the shining metal, sparkling beneath the eye of antiquarian zeal, some modern Monkbarns will bless that miser's spirit which once animated the adjacent soil, and from his newly acquired treasure, form the data, whereby to guide and perfect some curious investigation.

The most perfect and handsome churches now remaining at Bassein, are those of St. Paulo, and St. Francis: both have square towers, with cloisters and priestly residences attached; but the most exquisite remnants of the past, are to be found in the

interiors of beautiful chapels, where, through a vista of ruined arches, the eye dwells on the richly wooded scene beyond, and nature, in her sunniest dress, contrasts with the dark and mouldering stone, which she, like a laughing child, decking its grey and aged sire with summer blossoms, hangs with bright lichens, and many-coloured weeds. In one of these picturesque and beautiful buildings, a lofty arch remains, supporting the roofless walls, worn in unequal turrets by the season's change: a single and slender stem of the graceful banyan, springing from the fertile soil, has shot upwards to the centre of the roof, like a graceful column, whose capital of sunny leaves, crowns the high arch with its umbrageous shade. Milton has justly made the banyan an ornament of paradise; and the whole sylva of India, certainly possesses no trees more beautiful, than those which the blind poet has described as,

"Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
The bending twigs take root, and daughters grow,

About the mother tree, a pillared shade,
High over-arched and echoing walks between.
There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat,
Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds,
At loop-holes cut through strictest shade."

In strolling among the ruins of Bassein, the foot of the traveller will occasionally strike against a flat and humble block, or his eye rest on a richly chiselled tomb, whose inscriptions afford abundant matter for philosophic meditation, on the decline of the eastern power of Portugal, and the changed and humbled character of her chivalrous and daring sons. Tradition and romance have shed a charm of enchanting interest around the ancient history of that singular people, which is here touchingly recalled, as the traveller's eye traces many names which he at once must recognise as claiming ancestry with the noble blood of the first among those who fought for and established their country's power on the Indian soil. The names of Don Lorenço,*

* Don Lorenço encountered first the Turkish armada near Diu.

of Alfonso Albuquerque,* of many of the greatest and noblest heroes whom the policy of Portugal selected to fix her empire in the east, cannot be read without emotion, the more so when surrounded by ruin and desolation, the relics of a power itself tottering in decay. Of the immense oriental empire of Portugal, little now remains but *Goa,* its ancient capital; still indeed, a fine and curious city, but inhabited by a class far different from those, the early delegates of their sovereign's power. Hondura and Severndroog, with the important chain of forts once guarding the shores of the Southern Concan, look desolate and bleak, amid the dash and roar of old ocean's surges; while the great fortress of Diu, which the chivalrous Nuno de Cunha, first gained for an ungrateful master,† has become a comparatively small and

* In 1515, Albuquerque took the important seaport of Goa, and established it as the seat of the Portuguese government.

† John the Third of Portugal, 1546.

unimportant spot; and the churches of St. Paulo, and St. Francis, with the lovely chapels of Bassein, in whose aisles, perhaps, the descendants of the great Apostle of India,* lifted up their voice in prayer for the idolatrous nation among whom they dwelt, will soon be noted, but as a heap of rubbish, resounding with the unearthly yell of the hyena, delighting in its wild shelter of desolation.

* Francis Xavier.

CHAPTER VII.

INDIAN PEASANTRY.

"Good husbandry is good divinity."
ITALIAN PROVERB.

FREQUENTLY, when travelling in remote provinces, I have been induced to compassionate the condition of the lower classes of Hindoo families, who seem to endure a greater degree of privation than falls to the lot of suffering indigence in any other community. The residents of towns and camps, know little of the agricultural and poorer classes, with whom the jungles and

villages abound. To understand the social character and position of those who are really the Hindoo *people*, it is necessary to live much in the tented field, to travel in unfrequented portions of the country, and to associate freely with their unsophisticated inhabitants. The peasantry of India, whether of the mountains or the plains, are a picturesque and singular race; the varied character of their native scenery, and the political changes their country has undergone, have stamped on the different classes, distinct peculiarities of the highest interest. The sufferings of the very poorest are almost incredible; and were they not a patient, an enduring, and an *ignorant* people, they would find abundant incentive to seek the amelioration their condition so much requires.

The Hindoo peasant, stands, indeed, beneath the majestic palm trees of his native land, but his interests in it are no more; he looks up to the glowing sun which sheds its genial influence on the earth beneath his

feet, but its fertilizing power brings to him no benefit; he stands a free man but in name; his princes have been led captive, his country has been impoverished by its conquerors, his mind is enervated and enslaved, and what, it may be asked, remains to him of the gorgeous past?—simply a right to suffer and to die. Habitual degradation has created an apathy of mind in the Hindoo, which may pass for contentment; but the fact seems rather to suggest fresh reason for commiseration, when it is remembered, that the same circumstances which have disabled the mind of the Indian peasant from taking any interest in the world he lives in, are those which have degraded him to his present state, and rendered his privations unrivalled by those of any other people of the same class, to be found probably in the world.

The Irish peasantry, are, we are told, daily threatened with the chances of starvation; the picture is certainly not one of exaggerated misery, yet a comparison will,

I think, prove, that their state is infinitely superior to that of the Hindoo, who may endure an equal proportion of physical suffering, without the alleviation which the political position of the Irish is calculated to afford.

The very poorest shealing of an Irish peasant, is probably one of a group, whose inmates, miserable as they are, commonly possess some traits of human sympathy. If, however, the selfishness attendant on extreme indigence, forbids an interchange of kindly feelings between the very poor, nature, more benevolent than man, has granted to the Irish beggar a buoyant disposition, which cheers him on with visions of better times. The son of Erin, starving and naked though he be, has interests and hopes, and his spirit is free, as he treads the soil of his father-land. Unlike the poor Hindoo, he is not content to live and die heedless of the world around him; the price of potatoes is the grand desideratum, but he hath also an interest in political

unions. If both these necessaries to Irish comfort are beyond his reach, Pat can still beg and bully, seek work in the rich harvests of old England, or turn refractory at home. His very penury urges him to mingle in the stirring interests of his country; and if a day's chance-labour provides the Irish beggar with a groat, he will flourish his shilelah, and merging all misery in patriotism, shout out a stave of his national song, as merrily, as if elected grand master of all the Orange lodges in the land.

The very poor among the peasants of India are the undoubted inferiors of the Irish mendicant; interests such as these, (equal in extent, although differing in their character) have long ceased to arouse the suffering Hindoo; patriotism he has never heard of, and a hope of bettering his condition is an idea far beyond the boundaries of his mental grasp. All that he hath of this world's goods, is a hut or covering of leaves erected in the midst of a desert waste, a bamboo jungle, or a mountain

strath; here he raises a little grain of the coarsest kind, which, in its undressed state, satisfies the hunger of his craving family; he has neither clothes nor bed; and were the ground beneath his feet less sterile than it is, it would be taken from him and taxed.

We may think as we will of a pastoral life, passed beneath the spreading palm trees of a tropic land; our imaginations, revelling amongst the lovely scenes of an ideal picture, may seduce our judgment, and persuade us that on the teeming soil of this genial clime, the labour of life must be trivial, and its necessities few; a knowledge of facts, however, which are the only truth tellers, unhappily dissipate such poetic fancies.

Sunny skies, a soft and fragrant breeze, laden with the perfume of the jasmin and the orange, lofty trees bowed with refreshing fruits, and brilliant flowers rich in the varied and gorgeous dyes of an orient clime, are charming material for a poet's

dream; but "the gods" have not made the poor poetical; the starving peasant, with no leisure for the imaginative, regards nature, therefore, rather as a nursing mother, than as the lovely inspirer of graceful rhapsodies. Nothing can be more erroneous than the idea, that the natives of a tropic clime are exempt from the ills which poverty inflicts on the denizens of a northern hemisphere. Coarse and unsuitable food, lack of sufficient clothing, miserable dwellings, and hard labour, are positive evils, and vary little in their effects in any land. The poor in India, who are a simple and quiet race, may neither wail over, nor remonstrate on their lot; but their endurance of political evil arises from ignorance of any means promising an improvement in their condition, and their sufferings are certainly not less severe than those of the European wanderer, who seeks by vociferated appeals to move the compassion of his fellow men.

The northern provinces of Western

India contain few towns of importance; villages are sprinkled over the country, but they are usually small, and principally inhabited by husbandmen, and the proprietors of the little fertile land in their vicinity, which is devoted to the growth of various grains, oil plants, sugar canes, and cotton. The produce of these cultivated spots form part of the land revenues; and from the immense taxes levied, and the low state of general commerce, the earnings of the agriculturist are trifling indeed. The field labourers receive about three pice, equal to three halfpence a day; and although the lowness of wages appears to offer great advantages to the proprietors of land, they actually only tend to oppress and starve the labourers themselves. The agricultural implements in common use are of the rudest description; the men who use them are weak; and as, from the nature of the climate, constant labour is required to irrigate the land, the objects of cultivation demand the united efforts of a crowd of

farming servants, whose wages, small as they are, bear heavily on the resources of the farmer.

The usual food of the villagers is a handful of grain, coarse vegetables, and a little ghee. Some, who are fortunate enough to own a few goats, add the luxury of milk to their usual diet, or a dish of sour curds, called "dhye." The villages are filthy in the extreme; the huts are built of mud, about four feet in height, their owners seldom standing erect in them, but commonly crouching upon the ground in a sitting posture. If a house of a superior description is seen, it will be found to belong to the Patell or Thakoor* of the village, and one or two more, probably, to landed proprietors. These, however, are uncommon. The huts are surrounded with hedges of piled thorns; and the dusty enclosures, which swarm with flies and mosquitoes, are occupied by Pariah dogs, goats, and buffaloes. The resource of the male pea-

* Thakoor, village chief—Patell, the magistrate.

sants is smoking; and after the labours of the day, every man may be seen lounging on the dust heap at his door, with a little calian,* rudely formed from the shell of the cocoa-nut. The poor women are doomed to attend the flocks, driving them to the hills for pasture, and folding them at night. It is rare to meet a young woman in an Indian village, as early marriages, climate, and incessant toil, render them in appearance prematurely old. Miserable and squalid, these time-worn crones yet retain the besetting vanity of womankind; and a love of personal adornment is betrayed, by boddices interwoven with bits of looking-glass, and heavy bracelets of coloured ivory, which, being worn in considerable numbers, rattle hideously together on their bare and skinny arms. Every village contains some, who are shepherds by profession; these rustics pass their time on the spots selected for superior pasturage, exposed to the full and scorching heat of

* A small hubble-bubble, or oriental pipe.

the noontide sun, from whose ill effects they have no protection.

The shepherds of India have a custom, which is purely Asiatic, of *preceding* their flocks of pasture; "He shall feed me in a green pasture, and *lead* me forth beside the waters of comfort," said the psalmist; and the daily custom of the shepherd tribe of Hindostan, proves that this poetical and beautiful simile, was drawn from the practices of common life. In his solitary duties on the mountain side, the shepherd wiles away the noontide hours, by piping wild melodies on a simple reed, a pleasant habit, and one which, modulated by distance, has a pastoral and agreeable effect.

Another, and a remarkable class of villagers, are the Wahgeries. These men, as mighty hunters, are considered outcasts from society. The better caste Hindoos, who live on pulse and grain, regard their flesh-devouring propensities with horror; and the Mohammedans, however poor, loath the men who track the wild boar to

his reedy bed, and voraciously devour his unclean carcass. Whether or not, the nature of food produces particular distinctions in physiognomical expression, I leave to physiologists to determine; but so peculiar are the countenances of these men, that I should never fail to distinguish them, amongst the whole population of an Indian village. The Wahgerie has a bright restless eye, and a wild and independent bearing; the expression of his features is strongly marked, and evidences the existence of more powerful passions in the individual than is common to the general character of the Hindoos. As Shikarries, or huntsmen, this class is necessary to the field amusements of our European sportsmen, who frequently retain them as major domo's of a hunting establishment, and certainly treat them with much more consideration than any other class of their immediate dependants. The facility with which habit has enabled these Wahgeries to trace, not only the wild bear, but cheetas,

tigers, bears, and every description of game, to their cover, is really wonderful; the information they give is correct, and their endurance of fatigue in the pursuit of sport unrivalled; for days together, over rocky hills and steep ravines, across mountain torrents, and through almost impervious jungle, these men patiently track the foot-marks of their prey; and no good shikarrie will ever allow an animal to escape him, whom he has once seen in its lair, or received kubba (news) of, from a neighbouring village. When engaged in the chase on their own account, they commonly restrict themselves to animals suited to afford them food, and for this purpose shoot the wild hog with their rude match-locks; an act which is held as a criminal offence by all true knights of the spear. This is, however, an act of mercy towards the villagers; for your grim grey boar is a most wanton destroyer of jowaree and sugar-cane, trampling down half the produce of a field before he finds leaves suffi-

BOMBAY
BRANCH
OF THE
ASIATIC

Painted by H Walker Esqr. an original sketch by Lieut.t Pollard

Engraved by J Hamman &c.

ciently tender for his refection. Under the most scorching midday sun, a shikaree disdains to wear any protection against its rays, but a roll of coloured cloth wound slightly round his head. As outcasts, they frequently omit to shave their coarse and straggling locks; and for ablution, their appearance would lead to the inference, that their only acquaintance with water must be as a beverage. They are addicted to spirituous liquors, and display very intelligible expressions of satisfaction when presented with a glass of the much-admired "Old Tom," or any of those bewitching compounds which claim a family resemblance.

In character, the Wahgerie is daring and revengeful, ready to commit any act of violence for reward, and unrestrained by any laws, whether human or divine. All the predatory tribes of Western India are of this class, but distinguished by different titles, according to the provinces they inhabit. The Bheels are of Guzzerat and the banks of the Nerbudda river; the Ra-

moosee tribe inhabit the strong and romantic passes of the Deckan; the Kolies dwell in the richly-wooded glens of the Concan; and the Cosseirs in the deserts which bound Cutch, and lie on our northern frontier. All are mere varied and local terms for people strongly resembling each other in their wild and lawless habits; and as necessity has made these men hunters, and taught them to track with certainty the footsteps of the wild animals by which they are surrounded, so danger, oppression, and revenge, have given them the same art against their fellow-men; and it is said, that so far do the Wahgeries carry their lawless habits, that few would hesitate to take human life, at the command of their employer. It may be, that the practice of hunting gives the particular ferocity of character which distinguishes peculiar tribes, thus found scattered over the country; more probably, however, it is the result of circumstances. From superiority of daring or talent, many of these men

have been made leaders of bands of robbers; and it is remarkable how long, after becoming marked men, they have dexterously defied the power of their enemies, and how singular and complete has been the address with which they have preserved life and freedom for years, despite every means adopted to secure their capture.*

The romantic escapes of the noted Ramoosie chief "Oomeah," who was executed at the Poonah jail, with his two lieutenants, after being betrayed by his own people, at the termination of five years, actually passed in depredation, during which time, parties of the Company's troops were constantly on his track, are well known; and a very short time since, another bandit leader, far inferior,

* In travelling among these marauding tribes, it is necessary to agree with a chief to take a certain number of the clan into employ as followers. In this case a breach of faith never occurs, and a traveller frequently finds his barbarous ally a valuable coadjutor.

but of the same class as the Deckan hero, kept his enemies similarly at bay, in the province of Kattiwar. The offender had long baffled pursuit among the fastnesses of the neighbouring hills, while a price, more, it was considered, than sufficient to tempt the cupidity of his followers, was set upon his head. Year after year passed, but every attempt made to lure him from the unknown paths of his rocky shelter, proved unavailing; until, at length, two Wahgeries appeared at the bungalow of an European officer, stationed on detachment duty in the neighbourhood; and the younger, loosing a bleeding head from the folds of his cummerbund, claimed the reward. He had slain the robber as he lay sleeping in fancied security within a cave; having been guided to the place of the bandit's repose, by a treacherous and discontented follower.

Some of these reckless barbarians have been induced to make terms with the British government; and in this case,

prove faithful adherents to our interest. Yet, habit having accustomed them to meet danger at every step, their suspicions are not easily allayed, and they retain the readiness of defence, which marked their days of predatory power. At one of our outposts, beyond the northern Runn, is a pardoned freebooter of this description; he is a Cosseir of the Wahgerie tribe, is tall and finely formed, possessing great muscular power, and a fine, but handsome countenance. The effect of a long career of danger and defiance is, that he cannot associate with himself the idea of safety; and if, while conversing with the officer in command, any unusual sound attracts his ear, his hand is ever on his sword; and with an erect figure, and flashing eye, the redeemed robber half draws from the scabbard his trusty blade, ere he can remember the idleness of the gesture.

Wahgeries, and cultivators, are the principal inhabitants of the villages, in the northern

provinces. And it might be supposed that a community possessing so little, would be at least exempt from the cupidity of their fellow-men. Yet, penniless as these poor creatures are, superstition compels them, as it does their wealthier countrymen, to be victimized by priestcraft. Every village, however mean, contains a little temple, attached to which a band of roguish Fakirs extort their subsistence from the inhabitants of the neighbourbood, daily calling at the several huts, to demand largess of grain, or milk.

These villagers, however, are not the most indigent among the people; there is a lower class, to whom the very necessaries of life are doled with a grudging hand. It is not uncommon to observe on a sandy and sterile plain, bounded by hills, fit covert only for the tiger and the jackal, grass huts, so small that they resemble ant hills, rather than the abode of a human family. From this shelter

a few denuded creatures emerge, gazing in stupid wonder on the passing stranger. An aged man, a tottering crone, and a group of urchins usually appear; the mother of these last, probably, engaged in cultivating a plot of ground, or in bringing water, in a broken vessel, from the neighbouring pool. On this spot her children have been born, and here they will probably yield up their miserable existence. A handful of coarse red grain supplies their food, and a spring of brackish water their simple beverage; beyond this humble state, wants, interests, and sympathies are unknown to them; and thus they vegetate like the grasses of the plain, without knowledge, and without hope. Their language is a rude patois, distinct from that of the district, and quite unintelligible to the traveller; while many of these poor creatures regard a stranger, with the alarm one might be supposed to feel if undefended, and in the power of a wild and dangerous animal,

and fly shrieking to their hut on his approach; this shelter is not always, however, afforded them, some of these dwellings being but a canopy of leaves, supported upon the summits of four slender bamboos.

The inhabitants of remote villages, also sympathise in the unconquerable alarm excited by the colour and costume of a European. Often has a benighted and way-worn traveller been denied assistance from villagers, who on such occasions uniformly rush into their huts on his first enquiry, and either preserve an obstinate silence behind their closed doors, or answer the poor man's remonstrances with shrieks of terror. The language in which they are addressed is unknown to them, and superstition induces the belief that the white faced stranger is surely some Rakush or Demon, who will destroy them with the evil eye. Often have I heard of the torrents of invective showered in good hindostanee, on these trembling people, by luckless travellers among the roadless

mazes of some jungle waste, who have vainly required guidance from the people of a retired hamlet; until, weary of remonstrance, the baffled wayfarer has been fain to stretch his tired limbs, beneath some friendly tree, to await the morning light.

The first time I remember to have occasioned this terrible passion of fear, was in the neighbourhood of Purtabghur, a magnificent strong hold in the Deckan: riding at a foot's pace along the road, we were admiring the exquisite beauty of the fair valley of the Concan, from which the early mists were gradually exhaling, when, by a sudden turn in the road, our attention was attracted to a group of peasants, en route, as it would seem, to the neighbouring fort. The men, each with a water gourd, slung carelessly over his shoulder, were coming merrily on, trolling some simple ditty, while ever and again a gay laugh rang out its silvery tones, and convinced us that a village lass was of the party. As we approached, a pretty

bright-eyed damsel of some fourteen summers, skipped lightly from her companion's side to catch a glimpse of us; but no sooner had a single glance awakened her natural terrors, than gathering her saree tightly round her form, she uttered shriek after shriek, bounding like a hunted doe, from side to side of the road, vainly attempting an escape. Remonstrance was useless; the mere sound of the strange voices increased her agony, and when at length we had fairly passed her, the poor girl threw her arms wildly into the air, and flew like an arrow up the road, until added distance from the objects of her dread, together with the encouraging voices of her companions, gradually reassured her.

The lack of curiosity among this simple class, is also remarkable; when travelling in Cutch, between the cities of Bhooj and Mandavie, a distance of five and thirty miles, I engaged a poor old man as guide, who trudged before my

horse, between two villages, lying ten miles from each other. On entering into chat with the old Bhoomia,* he told me he was a native of one village, and had never travelled beyond either. Curious to know what incident of his monotonous life had produced the strongest impressions on his mind, and as old age is always garrulous, I soon learnt that the sole circumstance which had shed a light around his thoughts, was the casual journey made by his Prince through the village, on which occasion a royal attendant had given him two pice. Once embarked on this interesting subject, my aged friend never wearied in relation, but continued to expatiate on the glories of the "presence;" ere we parted, I had so far won upon his confidence, as to induce him to unrol from a corner of his turban, these interesting numismatic relics, at the same time informing me, that at his death they were to go as heir-looms to his daughter's child.

* A guide.

The old man's home was only twenty miles from the capital of Cutch, yet his enthusiasm had been insufficient to urge him to seek a second view of his revered prince, and his fancy was completely satisfied by the retrospect of that simple incident.

The poor old Bhoomia was a perfect oracle to the village gossips, for no people delight in chat more than the Hindoos, and yet no social community have, probably, so few subjects of conversation. When a knot of rustics squatted on the ground are most voluble, the gossip is ever of choul or pice,† the poor creatures having little interest in other topics.

The peasantry of the hilly portions of the country, whether of the Deckan or the Concan, lead a life wild and rude in the extreme. They inhabit huts in the glens and straths of their fine mountains, surrounded by thick jungles, and all the majesty of untamed nature. The peasants

* Rice, or money.

live on the coarsest grain they cultivate, and hunt the wild boar for their feasts. They frequently suffer severely from want of water, as well as during the rains, from extremes of climate, against whose ill effects they vainly attempt to secure themselves, by a sort of cloak, made from the leaves of the graceful bamboo. If, happily, the plot they cultivate is of sufficiently good quality to enable them to raise a little rice, the growers endeavour to obtain a price for it in a neighbouring village, but they are commonly prevented by travelling grain merchants, who compel them to part with it at a reduced rate.

In this condition, it would be more remarkable to find these tribes honest and industrious, than as they are, unsettled in their habits, improvident, and apt to supply their necessities with the abundance of others. Inhabiting a wild and beautiful country, these tribes of the peasantry, acquired in the midst of their poverty a free and independent spirit; accustomed to dan-

ger, they early learned to defy it, and supporting themselves, in imitation of their superiors, by predatory forays, sought shelter and security in the strongholds with which nature has provided them. In cases where circumstances have befriended these poor people, we find them as farmers and land holders, steady and peaceable, well acquainted with the native system of husbandry, and kindly disposed in their intercourse with each other.

In speaking of the peasantry of India as a degraded race, we are undoubtedly correct, but a question arises of vital importance, connected with the causes of this degradation. It is irrational to believe, that any people are by nature incapable of receiving improvement. Neither have I observed any peculiarity about the rustics of the east, by which such an inference would be induced.

In judging of the Hindoos, we are apt to form a superficial opinion of their character, and perhaps argue somewhat unfairly

on their habits and prejudices. We compare the little we know of them, by means of their intercourse with ourselves, with what we know of the people of foreign countries, far in advance of them in civilization and intelligence, with people who exist under free and peaceful governments, accustomed to regard their rulers with respect, as their protectors and fellow countrymen, influenced by the same interests, and amenable to the same laws. This is unjust; did we draw a fair comparison between the Hindoos, and the uneducated barbarians of any country which had been ground and oppressed by various and powerful dominion; did we even compare them with the aboriginal Britons, or the same, "our painted ancestors," in the more civilised of the early feudal times, a more correct opinion might be formed. The peasantry of Western India, have few vices which are not rather the effect of the circumstances which surround them, than of a natural tendency to evil. Numerous tribes are, it

is known, robbers by profession; but this is true only of hill tribes, men who live in dense jungles, surrounded by wild beasts, and on a soil which barely supplies the mere necessaries of life; of the Mahrattás, the heroes of their land, men who alone made a fierce and steady resistance to the oppressions of Mohammedan power, the tyranny of which gave them the savage lesson of considering all law nugatory, when the life or property of a foeman was the promised booty. If, then, in unprejudiced fairness, the condition of these tribes is considered, it will, I think, appear, that, (as in other lands,) the poverty of the Indian peasant, and the exactions of his rulers, have been the primary instigators of his crimes.*

In olden times, a system of landed finance obtained in India, well calculated for

* I do not here include the Thugs; as it is well known from recent works on Thuggee, that the fearful crimes of these people are the result of idolatrous superstition—in fact, a part of their religion.

the end required. Each pergunna or province, was regarded as a republic, the patell or magistrate being elected by the people. To the patell, the ryot paid tribute, and he became responsible to government, without other interference in the immediate concerns or management of the farmers. The system worked admirably, but was replaced by one decidedly less suited to the character and prejudices of the people; the new system, moreover, by no means preserving us from the chances of fraud, our interests depending on the representations of inferior officials, certainly not more honest in their calling than the condemned patells.

It is a fallacy to suppose, that a high rate of taxation will prove an incentive to the increased industry of the native farmers. The constitution and habits of the people would rather induce them to prefer the chances of starvation, to extreme, and constrained labour.

It is, perhaps, difficult to collect from a variety of classes the general native opinion

of the advantages of British rule. The soldier rejoices in it as a means of insuring regular pay, and good treatment, and the various grades of inferior officiates are of course its supporters.

The peasants are more removed from its immediate advantages, and while they allow that they can claim protection and justice under our government, complain, that its attainment is both difficult and tedious.

Much has been said of the brutality of the poorer Hindoos in their intercourse with us. My own experience fails to suggest instances of this. I have found them ever gentle and obliging, easily conciliated, and ready to offer any assistance which they *can understand* to be required. I may add, that during a residence of some length in India, in which I have mixed much with the people, and travelled in remote districts, sometimes only accompanied by my servants, I have never received insult or wanton neglect from natives of any rank, and frequently from the very poorest, a degree

of consideration, and even politeness, which would have graced the manners of a class, far their superiors amongst civilized people.

Tyranny, violence, and exaction, never fail to produce sullenness in return; but good-natured condescension always gains the confidence of the poor, who cheerfully endeavour to oblige any one whose manners are conciliating, even at the expense of their own inconvenience and fatigue.*

Travelling, about two years since, whilst weak and suffering from fever, I became oppressed with thirst, and desired a Hummall, trotting by the side of the palanquin, to procure me a little water. The servants we discovered, had neglected to put either glass or cup into the palki, and consequently left me totally at a loss for a drinking vessel. The bearer's brazen

* In offering these remarks, I must be understood as not referring to the inhabitants of towns or camps, who become corrupted by association, impertinent and avaricious; but particularly of the villagers, and the peasantry generally of remote districts.

lotah was suspended over his shoulder, but the touch of my lips would have been of course pollution. In this strait, my request might have been unheeded, but the poor Hindoo had more kindliness in his nature; desiring his companions to set down my palki, he took out a cocoa-nut, the only one he had provided for his refreshment, broke away the upper portion, filled the little bowl so formed with water, and winding a freshly plucked plantain leaf round the shell, presented it, at the same time passing his arm behind my pillows, to assist me to drink the cool and delicious draught. In this case the poor fellow equally respected his own prejudices and my distress; but I believe, that had the alternative not suggested itself, the lotah would have been the sacrifice to his benevolence. I may add, the hummall was not my own servant, but a government bearer, whom I had previously no opportunity of conciliating.

Travellers complain of their inability to

procure guides from the native villages—undoubtedly a very common evil; but it is scarcely surprizing, that poor men should object to be seized on their fields, or dragged from their homes, to walk ten or sixteen miles before a stranger's horse, often at night, and through dense jungles, for a few pice; sometimes receiving only abuse or illtreatment for the services they render.

So much has been written for and against colonization, as a means of improving the condition of the peasantry of India, that the subject is almost threadbare, and the clashings of opinion have yet left the miserable subjects of discussion steeped to the very lips in almost hopeless poverty. Without plunging into an abyss of financial argument, only suited for the consideration of a political economist, a few facts, the simple result of observation, may serve to interest the reader in the present position of the poor of British India; and the formation of just opinions is allowed to be the first step on the ladder of improvement.

I have before remarked that the peasantry suffer acutely from the privations incidental to a state of extreme indigence, and that it is an error to imagine that a tropical climate exempts them from these ills. As food, the people require but a little grain and a draught of water; yet many of the poor cannot even command these simple necessaries, although they may be young and vigorous, and the land about them, with a little expenditure of capital, might be made sufficiently productive to secure not only food to the cultivator, but a trifling return to the capitalist, beyond the sum expended. To suppose that the poor of India are independent of the comforts of clothing, is also a mistake; during the rains and cold weather, they suffer most severely from extreme chillness, and wrap round their shivering bodies any fragments of linen they can procure; but many, too poor to obtain any protection from the severity of the season, fall its easy victims.

The first object which appears to be required, is the general improvement of the roads, those of the provinces being many of them little more than ruts, worn by the broad wheels of the country carts. It has been remarked by an intelligent writer, that if a man travels all over the world, he may take the condition of the roads as a measure of the civilization of the people; a valuable truth, as it awakens us to the necessity of free communication, for the purposes of improved intelligence and general commerce.

A few pioneers, with the villagers' assistance, would readily improve the roads; and by the adoption of a superior sort of cart to the broad-wheeled machine now in use, the damage to them would be inconsiderable. This advantage would, of itself, induce the people to make longer journeys, and by that means acquire a greater degree of varied intelligence than they can now hope to obtain. Another great advantage would accrue from planting fruit-trees.

In many parts of Western India, the natives possess only the cocoa-nut; but the shaddock, the mangoe, and particularly the yam, would be most useful, together with the potatoe, which seems particularly adapted for the desirable object of providing the peasants of India with a variety of food.

In the northern provinces of Western India generally, the people suffer much and frequently from the effects of famine, the growth of grain depending on the quantity of rain which falls during the monsoon. The soil of these countries is frequently sandy, consequently better calculated for the growth of potatoes than for rice, which requires a moist loamy soil, with abundance of water. From baked potatoes a good flour might be obtained, which would keep long; and the leaves of the plant might afford forage to the cattle, whose bones, after a season of scarcity, whiten the plains, which have denied them even the common grasses for sup-

port.* The seed of the Neilgherry potatoe, which equals the Irish, is readily obtained, and would thrive well.

Dr. Heddle, to whom the residents of Western India are much indebted for his valuable support of the Horticultural Society, and their interesting garden in Bombay, has lately bestowed much attention on the preparation of the root of the tapioca, which, being particularly nutritive, offers an admirable substitute for rice and other grains; it appears unusually adapted for tropical climates, as the tree is readily cultivated, and requires no water for its support. The cassava bread of the West

* The Banian merchants, who keep large granaries, refuse to part with their grain under a rate it is impossible for the poor to afford, frequently refusing to dispose of *any*, during the first year of famine, in the hope of realizing immense profits, should the next rains be equally scanty. The farmers bury grain in large pits, during good seasons, as a provision for times of scarcity; this commonly rots, and the poor folks, who eagerly devour it in this state become the victims of malignant cholera.

Indies, which is a preparation of tapioca, is found to be a valuable item of common diet.

The Emperor Baber remarks, that the chief defect of Hindostan, as an agricultural country, is the want of artificial water courses; and the amiable reformer adds, "I had intended, wherever I might fix my residence, to construct water wheels, to produce an artificial stream, and to lay out an elegant and regularly planned pleasure ground." Such examples as would have been presented by the labours of the Emperor Baber, are exactly what are now required in Western India; for I believe that appropriate means would render large portions of its plains as generally fertile as those of the intelligent Turk's beloved Caubul.

The Hindoos are eminently expert in the use of their own implements, and would become equally so with those of a superior construction, when educated in their management. Being totally without mecha-

nical contrivance, the waste of labour is grievous to behold, mere numerical strength effecting that, which one well instructed workman would readily compass.

I have sometimes fancied that a few intelligent agriculturists, each provided with a grant of land in the several provinces, and acquainted with the native language, might produce good, by farming their estates in the English manner, with English implements, and the aid of native labourers; while, on the contrary, a crowd of colonists, overflowing the provinces of Western India, would possibly not produce any result but misery to themselves, and increased oppression to the poor. In the minories, dockyards, et cetera, of Bombay, the native workmen, under the superintendance of Europeans, display great ingenuity and intelligence; and the same system would probably produce similar results, applied to other subjects.

The climate does not present any serious

obstacle to the settlement of English farmers. It is only during the months of May, June, and October, the seasons immediately preceding, and succeeding the monsoon, that occasional exposure to the sun would be prejudicial to the constitution; and even during those seasons, our keenest sportsmen are seldom restrained from a prosecution of their favourite resource.

During the entire year, the mornings from four to eight, and the evenings from five to seven, are well suited for exercise, or such labour as may be necessary in supervizing an estate. The bullocks of the country are strong to labour; the horses and camels bred in the provinces, are also available for the purposes of agriculture; and herds of donkeys are now used by native merchants for the conveyance of grain and oil; the want of irrigation is the real difficulty; but water is found in most places near the surface of the land, and a few wells, with mechanical contrivances

for drawing water, would remove this disadvantage.*

An apology to the reader is perhaps due, for enlarging so fully on a matter in which he possibly may feel no interest. I have been betrayed into such prosing, by compassion towards the condition of a people among whom I have passed the happiest periods of my Indian sojourn, more particularly during the agreeable recreations of marching and picnicking. I cannot but

* In Mr. Laing's very interesting account of his residence in Norway, he mentions a system of artificial irrigation, which might be employed with advantage, I think, in India. Water from the highest perennial stream is led in wooden troughs, (the half of a tree roughly scooped,) among the fields, and the crops are watered with scoops, like those used by bleachers in watering cloth. Mr. Laing mentions that the extent of the trough is very great, and he has seen crops in Scotland, even, where they might in dry seasons be saved by similar means. Substituting the Arab well, for the stream, I doubt not, irrigation on this system might prove most decidedly efficient in the east.

feel anxious, that the increasing intercourse between India and England may be productive of improvement to these poor rustics, and that the revolution of a few years, may find them an industrious, thriving class, the thorns and mud heaps of their dusty villages, replaced by hedges of the fragrant mendee, and plots of useful vegetation.

CHAPTER VIII.

FOLLOWERS OF THE PROPHET.

"Ho! who art thou?"—"This low salaam
Replies, of Moslem faith I am."

BYRON.

HAPPENING to be in Bombay during the great Mohammedan fast of the Ramâdan, I was infinitely amused to observe the woeful and dejected looks of the poor Moslems, who lounged through the bazaars with a most kill-time and dispirited air, or sat cross-legged before the doors, indulging in shadowy anticipations of their evening meal.

The Moonshees dropt asleep over the pages of the Gulistan, and the whole

bearded population, bore convincing proof of the dependence of the energies of man upon his "creature comforts."

Unlike the wiser Catholic, who merely changes the materials of his food, in solemnizing the fasts his church enjoins, the Moslem abstains from all refection; even a sweetmeat is forbidden, and a spoonful of rice carries with it hopeless perdition. Not a hooka sends forth its grateful incense from the lips of a true believer until after the sunset hour; and thus, deprived of smoke, sherbet, and sweetmeats, a Mohammedan becomes as sincerely dismal as the etiquette of general mourning can possibly require. In truth, the Mohammedans would become but a spare people, did not their national feasts immediately succeed these seasons of privation; at the close of the Ramâdan, moreover, every wealthy individual presents dates, sugar, rice, sweetmeats, and sherbet, to his poorer neighbours.

The month Ramâdan is peculiarly holy

to the Moslems, from a legend in the Koran, assuring them of its being the favoured period, which was selected, for their sacred volume to be despatched from heaven, for their eternal blessing.

The second great fast of the Mohammedan year, is the anniversary of the murder of the grandsons of the prophet, Hussein and Hassan, on whom the hopes of the early Moslems were so anxiously fixed. This occurs in the month Mohurrum, which, although literally signifying mourning, is in Western India the epoch of festive mirth, as well as the occasion for a dangerous display of the party spirit existing between the rival sects of Sheeahs and Soonees, and the half-smothered hatred, latent between the cruel and rapacious Moslem, and the idolatrous Hindoo; original animosity only enjoying a temporary rest, at times when the remembrance of ancient feud is unexcited.

The Mohammedans may be said to be a better informed, though a less *capable*,

people than the Hindoos; but although professing a higher religious faith, the Mohammedans are entirely controuled and debased, by the influence of superstition and priestcraft. In conjunction with all the legendary lore attached to the history of the prophet, they encourage the idea of legions of Jins and Peris, Divs or giants, who have power over their affairs, lives, and property. Taweeds or charms are equally revered, and no individual would feel safe without one of these life preservers suspended round his neck in a gold or silver case; some of which are highly ornamental, by reason of fine workmanship, and the richly wrought chain attached.

The Mohammedan musjids are considerable ornaments to the principal towns of Western India. These places of prayer are simply terraces, ascended by a few broad steps, having a wall, frequently handsomely sculptured, on the side facing Mecca (the west), and graceful minarets at either end. They are commonly over-

shadowed by fine trees, the most fertile spots being chosen for places of prayer and burial.*

The Catholics, by no means equal the Mohammedans in the number or variety of their saints. Tombs of these worthies are distributed over the country, and may be distinguished by the domed roofs, usually surmounted by the holy name in Arabic characters. Incense is burned in these tombs, as in the temples; and at evening, morning, and midnight prayer, a loud gong summons the faithful to their thresholds: here they prostrate themselves, with their faces towards Mecca, kissing the steps and doorways of the sacred building. A Moolah vociferates the stated prayers and readings of the Koran, and gives alms to any Fakir who may demand them; to *request* largess from the stores of any, is an act of courtesy un-

* The Sita Phul, or custard apple-tree, a light and graceful shrub, is common to Moslem graves, it being considered a peculiar advantage to a Mohammedan body to moulder beneath one.

known to the religious mendicants of India.

It is a soothing and agreeable employment, to stand on some green knoll in the neighbourhood of a Mohammedan village, at the hour of evening prayer; and, as the sun slowly sinks, leaving his glowing track on the azure heavens, to observe the turbaned worshippers, coming each from the close of his labour, at the Mowuzzin's summons, to prostrate himself in humble reverence, at the shrine of his sainted peer, regarding him as the delegate of Allah, towards whom he scarce dares to raise his trusting thoughts.

Lacking tolerance, it may suit us to suppose, that, being a daily and public custom, and the religion professed being little understood by the lower classes, there is more of observance than spirit, in the worship paid; however this maybe, it is pleasing to see the acknowledgment of man (by stated prayer) of a power superior to his own, in a manner which is reflective

and serious, and with which the business of life is never permitted to interfere.

During the month Mohurrum, the gay processions of the taiboot animate the highways, and form a nucleus of attraction, which seems to drain of their population all the byepaths and habitations of a city. Not only do orthodox Sheeahs hold sacred the Mohurrum, but the Hindoos frequently join in its ceremonials, the whole party knowing, and probably caring, little about the origin, of what seems generally considered in the simple light of an annual holiday.

Long before the period arrives for these processions, the Moslem inhabitants of each division of a town, frame portable temples of light bamboo-work, which are tastefully decorated with coloured satins, foil, looking-glasses, tinsel, rice paper, and peacocks' feathers. The sepoys construct them in their lines, where a tent is usually erected as a temporary workshop. On the the 6th day of Mohurrum, the

men form groups, and, attired with gay silken scarfs, and coloured satin caps, bordered with gold and silver lace, and decorated with bunches of pearls, and silver tassels, adjourn to the military camp, parading with flags from house to house, offering sweetmeats, and collecting contributions for their taboots. The gay party, sing songs, eulogistic of the Sahib logue, and accompany them with the rattling of two stout sticks, much in the style of the "marrow bone" harmony of English villagers. A swordsman is commonly in attendance; and a masquerading figure, painted in very tolerable representation of a royal tiger, whose violent nature is fully expressed, by the trouble his keeper finds in retaining him by a long and heavy chain; notwithstanding the exertions of this indefatigable individual, the acting animal clings and climbs about the pillars of the verandahs, in a manner highly creditable to his own agility, and infinitely fascinating to all the

observant Baba Logue. The little Mohammedan children masquerade it, with sheepskins tied under their chins, in imitation of their grave and bearded seniors. The whole affair, in short, is more in character with the prefatory measures for a carnival, then those of a general, and national mourning.

On the tenth day of Mohurrum, the taiboots are borne on the shoulders of the people, and paraded about the streets and suburbs of the towns. Bands of native music pour forth their ear-piercing sounds; crowds of men, in all sorts of coloured raiment, enclose it on every side; and troops of Mohammedan women, clad in their mourning robes of dark green silk, precede and follow the dazzling toys. At certain points the processions join, and the taiboots are borne en masse to the several temples and musjids in the neighbourhood. At intervals they halt, and the women, forming a circle, move slowly round, beating their beasts with prolonged

and mournful cries; professional swordsmen engage in sham combats, and acting elephants with gay howdahs, reel about among the mingled crowd, forcing their way, where the press is greatest, and causing merriment, confusion, or annoyance, as the humours of the jostled might be trimmed. A large wooden horse, commonly but a sorry nag, forms a highly reverenced part of the procession; it being matter of belief, that after the assassination of the brothers, the favorite milk-white steed of the murdered Hossein, galloped back to that Prince's Harem, and led the people to the body of his hapless master. The mourning song of the Mohammedan women bears reference to this tradition; after a touching panegyric, in which the beauties and virtues of the young chiefs are eminently descanted on, the chorusses conclude with a lamenting apostrophe of, "Oh! fair and milk-white steed, where is thy lovely rider, whither hast thou left him?"

At midnight, the taiboots are paraded about by torch light, and the effect is very beautiful; blue lights are burnt before the bier, and rockets shoot over the heads of the suddenly revealed crowd; in truth, the decorations of the fanciful and pretty taiboots, flashing back the lights of the many torches which surround them, while all around is dark; the wild music, the gay scarfs and turbans of the "true believers," the songs of the women, and the silken banners floating above the whole, make the procession more resemble the dramatic glories of that in "Bluebeard," than any of the spectacles of common life.

In Bombay and Poonah, the processions of the taiboot are particularly beautiful; the wealth of the Moslem population allowing the means for considerable splendour. At Poonah, our government annually present the magistrate of the native bazaar with three hundred rupees, towards the disbursement of the expenses attending the ceremonies of Mohurrum; and European

officers, with parties of native troops, attend its processions. Notwithstanding the precautions used to prevent disorder in Bombay at this time, great confusion constantly prevails.

The rivalry of the Sheeahs and Soonees frequently produces bloodshed, and the parties bearing taiboots encounter each other in the crowded bazaars, and being in a high state of excitement and religious phrensy, often increased by the use of bang,* and other intoxicating liquors, great danger is incurred.

Pickets, with European officers, have hitherto kept guard at the entrance of the great bazaars, and on the procession entering the fort, the crowd were disarmed. This measure proved inefficient, and a public order was last year issued, containing eleven regulations for the processions of Mohurrum.

The bands of native music may now

* Bang, is a favorite stimulant, prepared from hemp seed.

only comprise a certain number of instruments, and all vendors of opium and bang, are commanded to keep their shops closed. Taiboots are not permitted in the streets before twelve o'clock on the last night, or after three on the following morning; and the introduction of the Zool Junnah, or horse, is forbidden. Processions are only allowed on the wide and public roads of the native town; and on meeting carriages or horsemen, are enjoined to cease playing country music, until the parties shall have passed the taiboots, which are directed to be thrown into the sea, the following day, before five P.M. Moreover, the inhabitants of Bombay are enjoined not to insult the Moslems during their celebration, neither offer the slightest provocation to violence.

The Mohammedans wear green, as mourning for the family of the prophet; for their own relatives, they simply abstain from the use of gay or brilliant colours, considering such unsuited to seasons of grief,

Green is established as the favorite colour of Mahomet;* and thence chosen in which to mourn the death of his descendants. With the exception of the prophet's family, the Hajis, or those who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca, are alone entitled to be mourned for in a verdant tint.

The Syuds claim to be descendants of the prophet's son in-law Ali, and are held in high reverence by the people. The Moolahs, as professional priests, read, and expound the sacred laws; but the Syuds are regarded as inspired, and possessed of learning, power, and wisdom, above their fellows. Thus, by virtue of mere descent, the Syuds claim and enjoy the reverence of the people; and as corruptions creep in

* Green is the color chosen by the prophet in all his descriptions of immortal joys. The brocades to be worn by the faithful in paradise, are described in the Koran as of green bursting fresh from the Tuba tree;—that wondrous tree, which produces not only dates, pomegranates, grapes, and all fruits, but horses saddled and bridled, &c. &c.

at every loop-hole which self interest can contrive to pick, by which glimpses of the world shine into all systems of priestcraft; so every vagabond and impostor who can mutter half a dozen verses of the Koran, in execrable Arabic, dubs himself a Syud, adopts the colour of the prophet, and makes a tolerable living by scribbling charms, distributing talismans, and gabbling prayers to the people. Respectable Mohammedans are greatly scandalized at this behaviour: but, for the most part, unless at the Presidency, the Moslems of Western India are poor, ignorant people, who are satisfied to believe anything, if told "in the name of the prophet."

In cases of distress, the poor apply for relief to their Syuds, as the repositories of all learning, sacred or profane. A poor man, whose wife or child is on the bed of death, rather than seek medical aid, flies to a Syud, who, for the offered mite, presents the applicant with a verse of the Koran, written on a slip of curiously

folded paper; and this inspires the patient with better hope, than is furnished by all the skill of the physician.

In some cases, after the charm has been procured, a change takes place in the diseased, who, by dint of a good constitution, gradually recovers, when, of course, the cure is ascribed to the Syud, whose fame gathers fresh laurels, and his coffers additional rupees, from every new triumph of imagination over the diseases of the faithful. The Syuds would seem at all times to have entertained a propensity for gain, unsuited to the dignity of their learned character; even the poet Sâdi, has a pleasant satire to this effect.

A King, he relates, gave a purse of direms, in accordance with a vow, to be distributed among the Syuds of his city. The youth employed as his almoner, wandered all day from place to place, and when he returned, he kissed the money, and laid it before the king, saying, "that he had not found any Syuds." The

king replied, "What story is this? since I myself know four hundred Syuds in this city." He replied, "Oh, Lord of the world! those who are Syuds will not accept of money, and those who take it are not Syuds." The king laughed, and said to his courtiers, "So much as I want to favour this body of men, the worshippers of God, this saucy fellow thwarts my inclination, and he has justice on his side. If a Syud accepts direms and dinars, you must seek elsewhere for a religious man. *

Many of the Syuds are ignorant in the extreme, and incapable of reading even their sacred volume; by early practice they acquire favourite passages by rote, and the repetition of these easily satisfies their disciples, who are not only unacquainted with the Koran themselves, but equally so with the language in which it is chaunted by the priests. †

* Gladwin's Gulistan, Tale the thirty-sixth.

† It is difficult to convey an idea of the faith the poorer people place in these ignorant Syuds; one

Many of the more intelligent Moslems are professional Moonshees, or teachers of the native languages. Some of these people are natives of India, and others are Persians from Shiraz. This is a shrewd and clever class, but great knaves appear among it; Moonshees being commonly impertinent, in proportion to their ability. Most of them drink wine, which, although forbidden by the prophet in the present state, is considered a venial sin, inasmuch as its use is permitted in the Mohammedan

trifling illustration occurs to my memory:—Our fruit trees had been injured by the depredations of paroquets and other birds; one morning I observed our Mohammedan gardener, sedulously engaged in sprinkling the leaves with common sand. Enquiring his motive for this strange proceeding, he told me, that at the hour of morning prayer, he had taken a chattie, or earthern vessel of sand, to his Syud, who repeated over it some verses of the Koran; he was now scattering this over our fig-trees, firmly persuaded, poor man! that the expedient would preserve them from all future depredations of the feathered tribe.

paradise; the advocates forgetting, that the wines of the gardens of happiness will not intoxicate, as does the produce of a grosser vintage.

Many who profess the character of Shirazees, have never been out of India; the truth is, that a native of Shiraz is as much esteemed for his pronunciation of the Persian language, as a Parisian is, for his accent as a teacher of French; all are therefore anxious to affect this superiority.

It is customary in Bombay, to speak of these men as *Moghuls*, but they have decidedly no well-founded pretension to the title; I have, after long enquiry, only heard one reason alleged for the practice, not perhaps satisfactory, yet a little probable.

The term originally used to distinguish the Persians, and their language, was Pharsee; this, when the *Parsees* came to the Indian coasts as settlers, created confusion; and the alternative which suggested itself, was to call all Persians, with-

out distinction, Moghuls, the Persian language retaining its title of Pharsee.)

The Moonshees, who are engaged as teachers to European officers, strut about in gay silk robes, bordered with gold or silver lace; a rich pair of shawls, forms the cummerbund and turban; cotton socks, embroidered slippers, and usually a valuable ring, completes the costume.

Every European, who has studied the native languages in Bombay, knows Sheikh Hudayut Oolah, interpreter of the supreme court, who ranks first of his class, as a man of abilities, and impudence. His house is the resort of the whole Moonshee tribe, and he holds a sort of soirée, to which Oriental students constantly repair. He is a sort of useful mischief, as most of his class are, who readily adopt and pander to the vices of Europeans, are on the qui vive for every species of intrigue, and in short, are a faithless and immoral clique, whom none ever trusted with impunity.

The Moslems of Western India are generally a finer looking race than the Hindoos; their dress is a muslin ankriha, secured over the breast on the side opposite to the one universally worn by their neighbour pagans. Men of consideration are luxurious in the articles of shawls and jewels; turquoise and emeralds, set in silver, are those most in favour.

The attire of the lower classes of Mohammedan women is peculiarly ungraceful; it consists of a pair of trousers of cotton, or silk, fitting closely to the ancle, with an outer garment in the form of a rustic's frock, which descends to the knee. Many of the women are handsome, or would be considered so, by admirers of the Jewish countenance.

The Mohammedans are particularly proud of their acquirements, and suppose themselves possessed of great imaginative powers. They are surprising egotists, and, like the Spaniards, poor and proud to a proverb. A short time since, a Moonshee

was domesticated with us, who afforded a curious example of this union of unfortunate qualities.

Abdool Kureem had not where to lay his head, or wherewithal to satisfy the cravings of a Persian appetite: but, like all his class, his manners were pleasing and mild, which won for him our commiseration. He accompanied us from the Presidency, and although a professional Moonshee, he was soon discovered to be grossly ignorant of even the construction of his native language. His leisure was devoted to inditing verses, which, execrable as they were, he imagined equal to Firdousi's: such was our poor poetaster's opinion of his own talents, that whenever any of his Mohammedan friends came to visit him, in lieu of conversation, he commenced by drawing out a long roll of closely written paper, and spouting his own verses, constantly pausing to ejaculate expressions eulogistic of his genius, which were courteously re-echoed by the deep-drawn Bismillahs of the listening coterie.

The prose of Abdool was as highly inflated as his poetic style; he delighted in the most flowery and wordy pomp of the Persian school. The following note, written by him, and translated by a Hindoo, is an amusing specimen of the unavoidable bathos, inseparable from this style of composition. It may be prefaced, that Abdool had been requested, during his morning walk, to enquire what time would be desirable for our gardener to send for some shrubs, promised us by a native, as transplants from his parterre. Some circumstance preventing his return at the time proposed, we received this specimen of epistolary grace.

"As long as the garden of the world is adorned with tender cypresses, statues of beautiful mistresses, and roses which are the cheeks of beloved ladies, so long may the garden of wishes, which belongs to the great Captain ——— (may his prosperity be perpetual!) who is a bud of the tree of

chiefship and a sprout of that of greatness, be flourishing and green by the watering of divine goodness.

"Your servant, (i. e. I) after presenting you the nosegay of his solicitous prayers to God for your advantage, which is gathered by the hand of well wishing and sincerity, and united with the threads of those prayers which are performed at dawn and midnight, wishes, that your sacred mind may know, that when your servant (i. e. I) requested from Gopal Josee, son of Radha Josee, the plants of Neem, which he agreed to give yesterday, he answered, that to-morrow, at noon, when the gun fires, you may send your servant to his garden, and he will give the plants which are required.

"(Signed) ABDOOL KUREEM,
"Moonshee of Shiraz."

The beauty of a Mohammedan letter, consists in the length of the exordium, the number of similes, and the paucity of facts

introduced. Good taste demands, that the form of the writing should be varied, not allowing the pen to move in parallels from right to left, but describing ornamental figures, by means of words required to convey the writer's sense. The letters of the most accomplished people, thus appear like a sheet of diagrams, instead of effusions of eloquent friendship, or urgent business. To persons of rank, letters are written on highly glazed paper, powdered with gold leaf; the characters should be small, the capitals in red or blue ink, and the distances between the lines considerable. No character admits of such beautiful and varied forms as the Persian, and some of these letters are triumphs of penmanship. Paper of the fine description required when about to address the great, is not usually sold; the writer makes it for himself, by spreading fine white size over delicately-grained paper, and when dry, placing flowers, stars, and other ornamental devices in gold-leaf, on it, by means of a slight solution of gum.

The more common kind is prepared by powdered gold-leaf, sprinkled on the paper while the size remains damp. Rude as the instrument appears to eyes accustomed to Mr. Perry's metal inventions, none but the nibless reed pen in common use, could produce the beautiful gradations and graceful curves in the Persian character, which, in their manuscript histories, or any carefully written specimen, are so eminently beautiful.

As Abdool Kureem was long with us, I endeavoured to teach him English, with the hope of increasing his capabilities as a tutor. His memory proved so defective, that I eventually abandoned my task in despair.

The reading book selected, was a collection of easy fables, chosen with the hope of the style attracting him, from its resemblance to that of his own authors. The first tale concerned the sapient doings of a learned cat, which he read, and re-read, for a considerably longer period than could

have been required for the composition of the volume, and, moreover, the whole was explained to him in the purest Persian. At length I ventured to ask, if my pupil comprehended the fable. "No." Did he at least understand the meaning of the word *Cat*, about which so much had been studied? The answer was appalling. "Kat?" replied the poet, with the puzzled look of one hopelessly plunged in a sea of doubt; "Kât? Allah Kureem! God is merciful, but, by the beard of my father, your servant cannot tell the meaning of Kât."

From this period I left Abdool to the manufacture of verses, to the enjoyment of a remarkable appetite, and to his favourite meditations on the probable locality of the "fountain of life," in which he as firmly believed, as in the philosopher's stone, and the houris of Paradise.

The accompanying sketch is a very tolerable likeness of our self-appreciated friend; but no effort of the pencil could express the conceit, languor, and indo-

lence, which formed his only characteristics.

Professional chess-players are less common than might be supposed; but some of the Moslems play a scientific and good game. I have never found them object to our pieces, notwithstanding the use of any images is forbidden by the precepts of the Koran.* Most good players prefer not looking at the board, and some are sufficient adepts to conduct two games at the same time. Others place a ring on any pawn selected by their antagonist, and give check-mate with the same, supported by only one piece.

The Phillidor of Western India, is a Hindoo called Ramdass, a native of Kattiwar. This man plays his best game, without looking at the board; and, as he sits in a corner of the room, it is curious to hear him muttering over the chances of the game, and reasoning with himself on the consequences of his moves. If a false step is made by his adversary, Ramdass imme-

* Vide Koran, chap. v.

diately detects it, and enumerates with ease, and in correct succession, the previous moves of both parties. When arrived at that which he is satisfied he can follow up, with one of his ingenious mates, Ramdass patiently awaits his adversary's move, and then, springing from the ground, instantly fixes on the required piece, and drops it on the effective square, with a smile of triumph, and a monosyllabic "Bus," (enough) 'tis hard to bear.

Ramdass told me he played chess at nine years old; his countenance is heavy, and his eyes apparently weighed down by intense thought. With constant practice, and a good memory, a student of chess, previously well-acquainted with its scientific principles, might, he averred, acquire his method of playing without a board, in six months.

Intelligent Mohammedans, are fond of metaphysics, poetry, and astronomy; for ethics, or logic, they have little taste; their knowledge on any subject is very super-

ficial, and the little they possess is of an obsolete style. In conversing with one or two tolerably informed Mussulmen, on the capabilities of the Hindoos, I have been amused by the instant depreciation of the poor Pagans, which rolled from the curled lips of the haughty Moslems. "How," say they, "can you teach these people any thing?—they worship stones, and their heads and their idols are made from the same blocks."

With all deference for this remark of the turbaned bigots, there is reason to think that the Hindoos possess a far greater capacity for knowledge, and more perseverance in its acquirement, than the Moslems. They are also a more docile race, more kindly in their natures, more grateful, more capable of respect and attachment to their superiors.

The domestic arrangements of Moslem families, tend much to retard improvement, the youths being confined to the harem until an advanced period of life, and instructed to bear themselves with an air of

gravity quite inconsistent with the sprightliness of an early age. I remember the two little sons of a Dewanjee, or Mohammedan Prime Minister, being introduced to us at Junágarh.* The little lads, scarcely ten years old, were attired in miniature imitation of their venerable sire, with turbans and cummerbunds of the most precise form, seated side by side on a rug, with crossed hands and downcast eyes; not one beam of gladness illumined their smooth and pretty faces. At their father's command, they commenced repeating verses of the Koran, slowly rolling their little bodies, from side to side, with a manner which would have been creditable to the gravest Moolah.

The effect of this system of Moslem education, is to encourage indolence and hyprocrisy; as the lads so situated commonly indemnify themselves for such training, by an early indulgence in the most debasing sensuality. The evil is

* A Mohammedan town, in the Peninsula of Guzzerat.

I fear, irremediable as well as great; as the Mussulmen consider their principal importance derived from the etiquette observed in their harems; and this feeling pervades all ranks, from the powerful potentate to the petty landholder.

The Mohammedans of course profess to hold the gentler sex in extreme contempt; but by some means or other, the ladies exercise considerable influence over their lords; and the sanctity and etiquette of the harem, affords them unquestioned power. So far do the Moslems carry these notions, that in a family of rank, a husband dare not, in the presence of his father, address his wife, or offer her any assistance, however urgent the case may be which requires it.

Notwithstanding many restraints, which seem to Europeans tediously irksome, the fair Musselmaunees have many amusements, which wile away the hours they are condemned to pass in the seclusion of the harem.

The ladies feast their friends in this retirement, and for days previous to the time appointed, amuse themselves by superintending the making of sweetmeats, and confectionary. The ceremony of the dinner table on these occasions occupies several hours; the dishes served, are numerous, and every lady present refines upon the grosser occupation of eating, by relating a tale, for the diversion of her companions; during intervals, the slave girls in attendance play lively airs on the vina or sitarr.

Dyeing garments, is also a favourite occupation; for this purpose, the fair inmates of two or three harems assemble, and dye, sing, chat, and feast together, for several days. They are well acquainted with the manner of extracting a variety of vegetable dyes, and use them with much taste. The favourite pattern has a scarlet ground, with yellow spots, to produce which, every part intended to be a spot, is tied into a little knot with silk, and

the whole dipped into scarlet dye; when dry, the knots are untied, and the white spots coloured with a preparation of turmerick. Embroidery is also a resource; and the Musselmaunees are adepts in creating delicate forms, on a transparent material, the whole resembling fine point-lace. A piece of particularly fine dacca-muslin is strained over a frame; the threads which run across the material are withdrawn, and on those which remain, the most exquisite flowers are wrought, with either fine thread, or silk of various colours.

The pride of the Moslems, induces the intermarriage of family branches; but if a Mohammedan has children by his first wife, a woman of his own rank, and he enters into another connexion, the offspring of the second wife cannot intermarry with any members of the first family.

The daughters of Syuds, are named after the wives of the Prophet; but the selected title is not supposed to be known

beyond the precincts of the harem. It is not etiquette for a male relative to address them by name; and I remember once asking a young Mohammedan the title which distinguished his wife in her father's harem, and he told me, he had never recollected to have heard it!

The general demeanour of the Mussulmaunees, is one of gentle diffidence; but in the unrestrained enjoyment of their social hours, none can be more gay.

From the Syud Azim-oo-Deen Hassan, a Mohammedan friend of high acquirement, and good family, I learned the particulars attending his marriage, which afford an amusing glimpse into the mirthful hours of this curious people.

For days preceding the wedding, the wealthy father of the intended bride fêted the Syud, (whom, as son-in-law expectant, he delighted to honour,) with rich presents of jewels, horses, apparel, and sweetmeats in great variety, troops of friends partaking in the enjoyments of music, danc-

ing, and festivity, with which the house resounded. On the day appointed for the bridal, the male relatives assembled, and the Cazi was in readiness to ratify the ceremonies. A venerable delegate was despatched to confer with the bride, who was personally unknown, of course, to her intended lord. Having been duly apprised of this visit, the dark-eyed object of the embassy was discovered reclining on cushions, sumptuously attired, and closely veiled. The grave deputy proceeded to ask, if the lady would yield her consent to a union with the Syud Azim-oo-Deen, with a specified dowry. *

The lady gracefully yielded her assent, and the proposal was twice repeated, lest any misunderstanding should ensue.

His mission concluded, the grave old Moslem returned to the expectant party,

* In all Mohammedan marriages, it is customary to mention a nominal dowry, to be paid by the bridegroom; the payment, however, is seldom exacted.

and thrice announced the bride's decision. The mystical ceremony was then confirmed by the Cazi, the "friend of the family," concluding his services, by performing proxy for the bride.

After a short homily, drawlingly pronounced by a Moolah, the bridegroom was introduced to the harem, where he found the "delight of his eyes" seated on a Persian carpet, closely veiled, and surrounded by all her young companions; seated before her, the bridegroom entreated his newly-made wife to unveil, and the fair one, all compliance, immediately consented. While the happy husband complimented his "ladye's charms," the laughing damsels played on him a thousand tricks, permissable on such occasions, when man,—poor man! is victimised, to indulge the sprightly sallies of a group of merry bridesmaids.

The following morning, the Syud was early aroused by a band of women, who, carrying him to an outer chamber, con-

strained him to listen to their songs on love and beauty, the burden of the melodies being, that a husband must be as obedient to his wife, as a lamb to the shepherd; after a time, the singers paused, to enquire what effect these words had produced on his heart; and he, denying they had any, the merry band commenced throwing their slippers at the poor bridegroom, until he confessed the forcible doctrine of male subordination.

This farce, more unusually ridiculous, as acted in a Moslem harem, continued at intervals for several days; after which, the Syud conveyed his wife to his father's harem. It is considered cruel to subject a bride to the restraint of a harem in which she is a stranger; and, consequently, for a twelvemonth after her marriage, a Mohammedan lady resides alternately in her husband's, and her father's harem.

Notwithstanding the many habits and opinions, entertained in common between ourselves and the Moslems of Western

India, they are, probably, more disaffected to our controul, than the Hindoos; the latter people, would tremble at the mere idea of the Mohammedans regaining their lost supremacy. The tyranny and ferocity of its Islam conquerors, is not forgotten by the natives of India; and the splended evidences of wealth and power, which decorate the cities over which their devastating swords first swept, make little amends to them for their fallen fanes and mutilated idols, for the seizures of their national treasures, and the subjugation of their princes.

Surrounding the city of Nuggur, which is situated about eighty miles from Poonah, the traveller may yet be charmed with numerous specimens of the finest Moslem architecture, to be met with in Western India.

The justly celebrated tombs of the kings of Nuggur are splendid evidences of Mohammedan power; while the towered

mausoleum of Salabat Khan,* shares admiration with that splendid cenotaph, in which the heart of the princely Aurunzebe, no longer throbbing with the feverish anxieties of conquest, rests amid the richest pomp of sculptured art.

The summer palaces of the Feriah and Beistie Baugs † are exquisite retreats, filled with rare plants, yielding delicious odours, and decorated with fountains, whose cool and sparkling waters afford the most welcome refreshment to the languid sense; but far exceeding all that the imagination in its happiest mood can picture, is the fresh and sunny verdure, the fairy-like retreat of the "happy valley."

This exquisite spot, situated a few miles from the city of Nuggur, is approached by journeying over a vast and desert plain, on which blocks of rude stone, lie scat-

* Salabat Khan. The prime-minister and beloved friend of Aurunzebe.

† Gardens.

tered among the scanty tufts of dry and stunted vegetation. The view is drear, bleak, barren in the extreme; but, when arrived at what might seem a mere fissure in the ground, when viewed from any point but its immediate edge, the eye, with startled admiration, falls on a scene, so unexpected and so bright, that it appears like one among those mystic visions, oft fabled to have been raised by necromantic wand; a rich and lovely valley, through which a small but silvery stream, threads its tortuous course, among garlandings of sunny foliage, until it falls in a sparkling shower, the murmuring of whose waters, mingle softly with the note of the bulbul, and the sweetly warbling honey-bird, lies sheltered and smiling beneath the traveller's gaze; while in the immediate foreground of this beauteous picture, rises an exquisitely-wrought Moorish temple, supported by gracefully proportioned Saracenic arches; slender jets-d'eau throw their sparkling waters high above the neigh-

bouring minarets, while tall and quivering betel-trees, cast their flickering and changeful shadows on the richly sculptured verandah of the temple. Justly might this fair scene be styled, "the diamond of the desert;" and often as the traveller in Western India wanders over hard and sterile tracks, where the tall camel lifts his head to feed upon the towering bramble, and rocky hills bound the unpleasing scene, his memory returns to the Moorish temple, the emerald verdure, and the glittering waters of the happy valley, with increased and ever new delight.

The Dumree Mosque near Nuggur, becomes curious, from an incident connected with its history. It appears that the masons engaged in the building of the fort, determined to erect a mosque, and subscribed a dumree each towards the work. *

* A dumree is the smallest copper coin in circulation. In refusing any application for money from a native, it is common to say, "Hum ec dumree nai degah." (I will not give even a dumree).

Trifling means will frequently produce valuable and great results. On the Dumree mosque, the chisel of the sculptor has been sedulously employed, and its elaborate beauty well deserves remark.

Half ruined, but splendid remains of fine aqueducts, are to be traced, in, and around the city of Nuggur; while numerous baths, pleasure gardens, mosques, musjids and palaces, afford an evidence of the luxury and power of its Moslem possessors, and never ending gratification to the admirer of eastern art.

Ahmedabad, Arungabad, and Bejapore are also rich in superb remains of Moslem wealth. They are now tottering in decay, yet no attempt is made to replace them, with any specimens of British architecture.

Aurungabad, which is in itself a charming place, possesses, for the traveller, additional interest, as the grave of the beloved wife of the princely Aurunzebe. The superb mausoleum erected to the memory

of this beautiful and deeply regretted princess, is situated in the vicinity of the city, surrounded by a protecting wall, and embosomed in rich and luxuriant foliage.

This exquisite building is a miniature copy of the celebrated Taaje Mahal, erected by Shah Jehan, over the remains of his lovely Noor Jehan, at Agra.

The principal portions of the beautiful mausoleum at Aurungabad, are composed of fine white marble, of such remarkable purity, and dazzling lustre, that the admiring eye can with difficulty rest upon it, when reflecting the powerful beams of a meridian sun. Four large and lofty minarets, which grace the angles of the building, are of somewhat coarser materials, and crumbling with the attacks of time; still the appearance of the building is little injured by this effect, and its gilded domes, richly chiselled ornaments, and slender minarets, form a gem of exquisite and unusual beauty.

Shah Musafir's tank at Aurungabad, also

deserves a place among the curious and interesting remains of Mohammedan splendour. The reservoir, which is of considerable extent, is surrounded by a finely built and substantial wall, erected on a series of pointed arches, half blocked up with crumbling stones, but garlanded with flowering creepers, rank weeds, and clustering lichens. The tank is filled with tame carp; and four jets-d'eau scatter their mimic showers, to refresh the neighbouring verdure. Rich and luxuriant gardens, affording a dense mass of tamarind and cypress trees, overtopped by the loftier palms, afford a charming background to a pretty arched kiosk, glittering with gilded ornaments; while the cool waters and the pleasant shade, render the spot, marked by the good taste and benevolent purpose of the Shah, a favourite resort of the Mohammedan residents in its immediate vicinity.

It is impossible to leave the neighbourhood of Aurungabad, (however tired the reader may have become of its architectu-

ral remains) without noticing the singular fortress of Adowlatabad, which is situated on the road between Aurungabad, and the great cave temples of the celebrated Ellora. This remarkable stronghold is one of the most curious fortifications in Western India, and its grandness of proportions, combined with peculiar minuteness of detail, renders it a valuable remnant of olden time. The fort occupies the summit of a conical hill, partially overgrown with a leafless thorn; while, half-way down, a succession of turretted bastions afford additional defence to the crowning portions of this singular stronghold; and a double wall, the space between each being overgrown by a dense jungle, surrounds the base of the rock on which it stands. The fort of Adowlatabad is now desolate, and tottering in decay, and all which identifies it with the interests of the present, is a slender minaret, towering amid the jungle waste, and a little newly chunamed mosque,

nestled among the dark ruins of the tower fortifications.

The Mohammedan buildings at Ahmédabad, contain many exquisitely chiselled remnants of Moslem art; and among the luxuries of the olden time, are to be seen spacious subterranean apartments, excavated as a means of insuring a cool retreat during the intense noontide heat of the summer season. Several of these apartments remain in good repair, and are considered valuable additions to houses, which European residents have erected on the site of Moslem dwellings.

The Taaje of Agra is a gem of too great value for the British government to lose, and a sum (Lieut. Bacon mentions) is set aside for the purposes of its repair and preservation. When travelling through parts of Western India, I have always felt regret, while admiring the stately monuments of Islam power which decorate the most beautifully situated cities, that they should be suffered to crumble into mere studies

for the travelling artist, instead of being renewed for purposes of use or convenience. For years "the cormorant and the bittern have alone possessed" them, and the mud hut of the despised outcast, now leans against the palace walls, on which Moslem art has exhausted its richest treasures.

The personal memoirs of the Emperor Baber, whose opinions I am always reminded of, in thinking of modern India, and the condition of its people, is a most interesting and curious work, a text book for the advocate of civilization to the natives of Hindostan. He wrote far in advance of the opinions of his age, but his own are true and enduring. He desired, not only to seize and conquer the countries to which he came, but to improve their natural productions, to raise the condition of the people, to sink wells, to build baths, cultivate gardens, erect posting houses, and built stately monuments, to proclaim his fame to future ages, and invite

the people, to the general improvement of their country.*

The beauty of Moslem cities, offers no protection to their remains; on the contrary, the graceful shrubs, which droop in luxuriant richness over arch and tower, hasten their decay; and a few short years will bury them in the dust, unless some means are taken to preserve the lingering remnants of their splendour, and save them from the character, of

> "Monuments that the coming age,
> Leaves to the spoil of the season's rage."

* Vide Memoirs of Zehired-din Muhammed Baber, Emperor of Hindostan, translated by Dr. Leyden.

CHAPTER X.

SURAT.

"—Nothing but was bright in their degrees ;
The lowliest dwellings the rich sunshine wear,
Ships spread their dazzling canvass to the breeze,
And sail like lessening stars, out on the dark blue seas."

THIS once populous and important city, is situated about a hundred and twenty miles north of Bombay. The intervening shores possess few attractions of scenery, being low, flat, and uninviting to the eye. In olden times, immense traffic was carried on between the ports of Surat and Bombay; but it has declined in later days, the city has fallen out of repair, and the streets are narrow, dirty, and comparatively speaking, thinly populated.

The city of Surat is agreeably situated on the river Tapty, a wide and pleasant stream, cooled by the fresh breezes of the Indian Ocean, and was, in the commerce of the east, considered as little inferior to Bombay, as an emporium of Indian trade, connected with the rich traffic of the Arabian ports, and the Persian Gulf. The pirates of the neighbouring Gulf of Cambay, however, like those of Bate, appear to have offered considerable difficulty to the early navigators, in pursuance of their dangerous habits, as a bold, daring, and reckless class of men. The bazaars of Surat, like those of Bombay, were, in those palmy days, when strangers and merchants came to her from afar, filled with costly goods, and animated with the groups and costumes of various and many nations.—The proud Moslem, the stately Armenian, the crafty Jew, the bustling Parsee, the daring Arab, and the cautious Hindoo, all mingled in her streets; the rich cornelians of the neighbouring shores, the fine gold

and silver tissues of native art, the diamonds of Golconda, the rubies of Ceylon, the pearls of Ormuz, the cedar and the spices, the indigo and the opium, enriched her bazaars; while the fine teak wood of the neighbouring forests, was imported from her crowded shores. Like the ancient Tyre, she was "a merchant of the people for many isles;" but now, in common with all the cities of Western India, which were famed for oriental commerce in olden times, Surat is humbled to the dust. Her palaces are crumbling remnants of the past; her gardens are tangled with the weeds of desolation; her revenues are decreased, and her population is scattered among distant lands. The ancient inhabitants of Surat undoubtedly lived in the free enjoyment of an unusual degree of splendour; and the evidence of this fact, not only remains in their lovely gardens, richly supplied with the choicest and most fragrant variety of the Indian shrubs, and sparkling fountains, the cool and re-

freshing results of Moslem taste; but in their summer palaces, their marble baths, their windows of stained glass, their country villas, their "linen and agates," their cunning workers in gold and silver, their weavers of "purple and broidered work," fabrics, the most costly and the most delicate.

The Portuguese, as a commercial people, preceded the British in an establishment at Surat; but on our offering superior advantages as trading experimentalists, our footing among the people was established. A few years since, and the fluttering colours of many nations, decorated the foreign factories of Surat; but in later times, the Dutch, French, and Portuguese trade has been on the decline, and British commerce *only*, retains its claims to importance.

Two years have scarcely elapsed since a destructive fire broke out in the city, which not only despoiled it of many of its finest buildings, but by consuming the stores of the merchants, reduced many families to a

condition of miserable destitution. A subscription was raised for the sufferers, and the city is partially restored.

The ghauts or steps, leading from Surat to the bank of the river, are commonly enlivened by gaily attired figures, performing the necessary ceremonies of ablution; or by Dhobies, busily engaged in violently beating garments against smooth stones, placed purposely in the river, as a necessary adjunct to this cleansing process. The blanchisseuses of the Seine, energetic as they may be, are infinitely more gentle in their vocation than the Dhobies of India; yet, unless some wayward hooks, or acutely edged buttons interfere, something in short, not provided for, by a system suited best for the draped garments of native costume, it produces less damage to the articles subjected to the process, than would be readily believed.

For religious ablutions, Pulparrah, a very holy place, situated about six miles from Surat, on the river Tapty, is usually pre-

ferred to the immediate locality of the city. Pulparrah abounds with altars, Hindoo temples, and sacred trees; and possesses a solemnity of appearance, in admirable accordance with its sacred character. Here the Hindoos burn their dead, scattering the ashes to the holy waters; and flowery sacrifices adorn the neighbouring groves. Here may be seen the high caste Brahmin, a single lock depending from his closely shaven head, his outer garment laid aside, and the mystic triple cord across his shoulder, making pooja on the river bank; the slender and pretty maiden, forgetting for a time the modest shelter of her flowing saree, bending gracefully to the water's edge; herds of sacred bulls, quaffing the cool waters of the placid stream, while richly sculptured ghauts and sombre domes, cast their dark shadow upon its glittering surface. Pulparrah is a spot of venerated celebrity, and devotees resort to it, from very numerous and distant points.

Surat, and its neighbourhood, is thronged with religious mendicants, Fakirs, Jogiès, and Gosaens; these worthies find their advantages, in a place of populous resort, where they indulge the "dolce far niente," at the expense of the credulity of their priest-ridden brethren. These fraudulent imposters, assuming to be the chosen servants of their impure and hideous deities, draw alms from the people, claim to themselves privileges, and make demands whose nature is most preposterous. I once observed one of the Mohammedan variety of these strange beings, enveloped to his shoulders in dead bushes, and perched on the top of a sandhill, far removed from human habitation, yet, shouting the name of "Allah," in stentorian tones, in the distant hope of attracting the reverence of a passenger, and appropriating his sympathy, in the form of rice, dates, or money. The sufferings which an actively minded being might be induced to suppose, must attend a condition so solitary, and so tedi-

ously spent, are trifling to a native; inasmuch as with all classes, nothing is more dreaded by them, than the necessity for exertion, and no degree of reward will compensate them for it. Moreover, such is the reputed holiness of the itinerant priesthood, that they ever possess the comfortable consciousness of an unlimited sovereignty of opinion among their countrymen: thus a Hindoo layman dare not refuse one of them anything in his power to give, although the demand might be made for the wife of his bosom, or the children of his love, *all* being at the mercy of these unconscionable vagabonds. Some short time since, a fine old soldier, named Chittoor Singh, who had been, for a period of thirty-five years, a faithful and valued servant of the India company, (employed as a chief guide in the quarter-master general's department, during times of local rebellion, and who has been at the taking of most of the forts and strongholds which have fallen to the arms of British power in

Western India,) in travelling alone, mounted on a serviceable and handsome horse, was encountered by a pedestrian Jogie, who unhesitatingly demanded from the old man, several articles of his dress, a large sum of money, and the horse on which he rode. Poor Chittoor Singh, albeit ignorant of any means by which to proceed on his journey, felt constrained to submit, and "his reverence," the foot-pad, left him to trudge on as best he might. The defrauded traveller, wearied and tired, soon seated himself by the way-side, when a man riding a camel happening to pass by that way, invited him to mount. The sequel of the story is soon told; poor Chittoor Singh was thrown from his elevated position, and has been long a pensioner on British bounty; lamed as he was, and disabled, by a compound fracture of the thigh.*

* Chittoor Singh was severely wounded at the siege of Bhurtpore, for which he receives a pension from government. On the capability and probity of

The hospital for aged and diseased animals at Surat, is very similar to that of the "Pingera Pool," in Bombay; and like that merciful institution, is a richly endowed Jain establishment, containing every comfortable and necessary arrangement for the protection and good treatment of the animals received. Travellers of the olden time, have described the means of gratifying insect appetite in the entymological departments of this vast boarding house, as those most loathsome and disgusting; but as no customs of the kind exist at present, I am induced to believe that persons may have been misled by false representations; in short, that the quizzing servitors of the animal hos-

a chief guide through an enemy's country, much must depend. Chittoor has proved himself devotedly faithful, as indeed have all the native soldiery. He now lives at his native village, about thirty miles from Bhooj, in the province of Cutch, where he enjoys that "otium cum dignitate," which his long services so richly merit.

pital, amused themselves by testing the credulity of the traveller "Logue."

The produce of Surat is abundant; the general varieties of the best Indian grains flourish well; crops of good wheat even are not unusual, and English vegetables thrive admirably, in the cultivated gardens.

The rides around Surat are delightful; long pleasant lanes, sheltered and woody, adorn the neighbourhood, while the open country, studded with villages, farms, and plots of useful enclosure, affords constant interest and refreshment to the eye.

Surat, as a military cantonment, was, in olden time, universally allowed to be the pleasantest station in Western India,—celebrated for its amateur theatricals, its hog hunting pic nics, and all the other agreeable means of inducing good feeling, and binding society together, with

> "Laughter, freedom, mirth, and ease,
> And all the smiling deities."

Moreover, the neighbourhood of Surat

abounds with pleasant halting places: consequently the tents and beechobers were wont to be in constant requisition, by reason of the sporting propensities of the resident society. One of the most favourite mucahms (halting places) for general resort, was the neighbourhood of a building called Vaux's Tomb,—itself a tall, square mausoleum, situated about twelve miles from Surat. The tomb was erected to the memory of an individual connected with the old Dutch factory; it is now kept in repair by the British Government; and, being erected on a slight elevation, at an angle formed by the Gulf of Cambay, and the embouchure of the river Taptee, the tower serves as a landmark for trading vessels bound for Surat, from the southward, and also from the numerous ports of the Gulf of Cambay. The coast is flat, and sterile at this point; and behind the tomb is an impervious bauble* jungle, of considerable extent, abounding with wild hog.

* Mimosa Arabica.

To this promising spot the civil and military employées at Surat were wont to repair, commencing their hunting operations with a bumper, drained in real good fellowship, to that well-known chorus,

"Here's to all who fear no fall,
"And the next grey boar we see."

Thus Surat, and the wooded hills in its immediate neighbourhood, were justly celebrated for its abundance of game, its capital halting places, its spirited sportsmen, and the frequency of their pic nics; the enjoyment of the last, producing healthful and delightful recreation to the "Sahib Logue," but a most grievous infliction of labour and fatigue, to the unfortunate "Noka* Logue," whose services are in requisition on the occasion.

Reader! if you have never been in India, if your notions of hunting are confined to the fine county of Leicestershire or Herefordshire; if you understand only the fatigue of arraying yourself in a first-rate

* Servants.

costume of Buckmaster's or Stultz's; if you know only the difficulty of travelling by carriage or railway to the splendid mansion of a friend, in the hunting season, little, indeed, can you know of what the Indian sportsman undergoes, or the bustle and excitement which attends the setting off of a pic nic party.

Servants running hither and thither, all without forethought, care, or arrangement. Spears, saddles, grain bags, and heel ropes, lying in mixed confusion with teacups, plates, ale bottles, and loaves of bread; every body seizing upon every thing, and propelling them into the most unsuitable positions; gindees* forced into most incongruous connection with biscuits, pickles, flour, sugar, spurs, overalls, and ticking jackets! Ducks and fowls, peeping through their prison bars, and breaking into a "Quack Aria" in full chorus, as the baskets which contain them are thrown carelessly about, in the general bustle; dogs in-

* Copper wash-hand basins.

dulging in yelping remonstrance to the cootah wallah's* rope; masters urging expedition, servants quarrelling in concert, camels roaring, and every one ill-humoured, completes the scene.

At length, however, the carts are packed, and the lazy bullocks start. By dint of the driver's loud halloo, and an energetic system of tail-twisting, the anxious sportsman imagines it just possible, that, after his twenty miles' morning ride, he may have some distant chance of a hasty breakfast, when arrived at his first mucahm: his hopes are generally well founded. The day is passed in hunting with his shikarries,† or following his beaters,‡ in pursuit of smaller game. A comfortable repast ensues; the kitchen range, in gipsy style, being composed, not of Arnott's patent stoves, but of four stones, heaped ingeniously together. This over, the stores are all

* Dog keepers.

† Shikarries—trackers of wild hog.

‡ Beaters,—peasants armed with sticks, who precede the sportsman, to arouse his game.

repacked, the cook, with teakettle in hand, pursues his way, the carts and camels follow, and on the single remaining bed the wearied sportsman soon reclines. This repose, however necessary, is seldom uninterrupted: ere the second watch, a cow stumbles over his tent ropes, threatening an entrance to his bedchamber; or a herd of ill-conditioned donkeys, bayed at by the neighbouring curs, scour across the plains, in search of scattered forage.

Persons exist, with whom the donkey tribes are favourites; and who declare that, from Balaam's to the present race, all possess talent and gentle virtues, which none but a physiognomist can discover. It may be so: but ask the awakened sportsman his opinion; ask him if *he*, beneath his few yards of canvass, on the open plain, could give one of *these* a macaroon, even with no more benevolent object than poor Yorick's, excited "curiosity,"* he would, I am sure, hastily reply, No! And I would,

* Vide Sentimental Journey.

like himself, from my nocturnal experiences in India, be induced to join, *con amore*, in a serious and well-set anathema, against the quadruped helps of the potter and the grain merchant, more especially those employed upon the free system and board-wages principle, one which confers upon the Indian public a more important nuisance, than even the marrow-bone-and-cleaver disturbances, of England's village homes.

The French Tower, near Surat, is a noticeable spot. This is an ancient and isolated building, situated on the east bank of the river Taptee, at a short distance north of the city. Its features are those of a picturesque old tower, embosomed in a dense jungle, from which spring many varieties of that graceful adjunct to an Indian landscape, the feathery palm, with its tall coronal of dark-green leaves, varied here and there with the tint "*feuille mort*," of rapidly-decaying hues. A Hindoo bridge of frail bamboo, leads from the little pro-

montory, on which it stands, to the opposite bank, and the whole forms a pretty and interesting picture. The French gardens, in the neighbourhood, also deserve remark; they are luxuriant and pretty; and close to the water's edge is a double-storied Chinese-looking bungalow, formerly the residence of the French Chief at Surat.

Thus much has been remarked of the local characteristics of a spot, to which every one who has passed in it a portion of his Indian career, recurs with lively feelings of interest and regard. A single trait of its social characteristics, however, must not be omitted. Every town in the world, sufficiently civilized to support that superfluous hair-destroying artiste, yclept a barber, possesses some animated curiosity as the Figaro of the day, a being full of bustle, news, and gossip, whom every one is glad to listen to, and who seems to enjoy a patent for the manufacture of original incident. To the talented pen of the accomplished Beaumarchais, we are indebted for

the full-length portrait of the most lively, witty, charming Tondure of his day. But even in the east, the race exists; and the hujjam* of an Indian town, though less accomplished than the French artificer, less dangerous, less mischievous, is still an idiosyncratic being, equally distinct and peculiar, both in his habits, his character, and his talent. Every one knows Old Tom, the barber at Surat. I fancy I can hear him now; "Mata Peta,† make you hundred years old;" and imagine I see him, travelling from house to house, with his huge spectacles, small turban, and checked bundle, containing soap and brush, thrown carelessly across his shoulder. Poor fellow!—the wrinkles began to play around his hollowed eyes, when he took unto himself a young and blooming wife; but after this serious act, things failed to go so well with Tom the barber, as of yore. Society and he were too familiar, and Tom heard

* Barber.

† A term of endearment, signifying father, mother.

many cutting jests upon the matter, more telling, perhaps, though less witty, than his own. Yet Tom cared not; still he went from house to house, untied his little bundle, exercised his vocation, told his news, and, with his oft repeated wish for a century's age to his employer, took his leave with a smile and a salaam, as merry and as courteous as before. Everybody liked him; and even at a distant interval, no one can remember Old Tom the barber of Surat, without a friendly feeling for the eccentric individual, who afforded so many periods (brief though they were) of entertaining chat.

Surat, equally with Baroche, on the Nerbudda River, is celebrated for its manufacture of strong cloths; and from Cambay, which is situated at some distance to the north, Surat is supplied with abundant varieties of agate, cornelian, jaspar, and other stones.* Gholam Rassaul,

* Cambay itself was once a spot of great opulence and importance; it is now stamped with the totter-

who is at present the great merchant at Cambay, travels with his cabinets of varied goods, comprising knife handles, necklaces, et cetera, as far as Madras, where he finds a remarkably good market for his wares. Gholam, in his character of a stone merchant, is a highly respectable man, and by no means a specimen of his class; the borahs of India, being the most impertinent, imposing, unfairly dealing persons, to be met with in any mercantile community.

When any unfortunate individual has once been induced to become the debtor of a borah, every week brings him a dun from his impatient creditor. These are frequently forwarded by post; and the trader employs a purvoe, or writer in the bazaar, to make out for him an English case, to which the creditor signs his Guzzeratee titles. Some

ing ruin of desolation. It was, in olden times, the rich emporium for silks, gold, stuffs, and finest fabrics; it is now abandoned by all of wealth or interest; its great men are brought low, its nobles are forgotten.

of these are rather amusing in their orthography and style; the confidential manner of touching on private affairs, and the concluding promise of remembering the ex-debtor in the trader's orisons, is certainly peculiar, and most essentially original.

The following is a very fair specimen of the general style of these epistles, being correctly copied from a dun now in my possession. The author is a very well known, and eminently importunate member of his class.

"17th September, 1838.

"WORTHEY SIR,

"I am with due respect and humble submission, beg leave to inform your generosity, that I am extremely sorry for not receiving any letter from your honour long time; also not heard least news of your welfare; do not no the case of it, therefore I duely request to communicate on the first opportunity, and same time let me know anything you require from hence. Your note of hand, dated 2nd

December 1835, almost three years ago, unsettled, and its interest will be about fifty rupees; therefore I humbly beg to request you will be kind enough to commence to make me payment through the pay office, by the remittances, (monthly) till the amount of note is clear. *I believe your present allowances is not enough for your expences,* therefore remit my amount as you will be convenient, because the interest incurs day and night; therefore I beg you to clear the amount of my claim, as I am very needy of the cash. I am is poor man, your goodness should not refuse to pay me before this, without least trouble, as I am holly yours; I recon you are my protector, and I do willing to keep correespondence with your generosity; however, after your settled with me, will see.

"By complying with this my request, will pray for your long life and happiness.

"Worthey Sir,

"Your most obedient humble servant,

"Ahmud Essaw, Borah."

Surat, although cheerfully situated, well supplied, and still possessing considerable native and commercial importance, is principally remembered with pleasure on account of its eminent character for sociality as a military cantonment; few places of foreign sojourn, can be so truly agreeable, as a pleasant Indian station, where sympathy, congeniality, and good feeling exist. It is the interest of each so situated, to increase the sum total, the common stock of camp amusement; thus none can be strangers to the other.

If there's mirth in our house, 'tis our neighbour who shares it;
If peril approach 'tis our neighbour who dares it;
And when we lead off to the pipe and the tabor,
The kind hand we press is the hand of a neighbour."

It has been frequently remarked, that persons returning to England after a lengthened residence in India, appear to feel a warmer interest in each other's welfare, and more attached to each other's society, than individuals who have never quitted

their native land. It is not remarkable that such should be the case. Similar dangers, similar enjoyments, and mutual dependence, must ever excite kindly and genial sentiments. And the recollection of pleasure shared, and perhaps created, to soothe our anxious hours in a foreign clime, must form a tie more than usually strong, when social members from the quiet microcosm of an Indian camp, meet again in the happier scenes of their native land.

Thus has it ever been with those, whom fate has associated together in the pleasant scenes of cheerful Surat; and many are the hunting tales, which, related in far distant scenes, will bring again to the mental view of the once keen Indian sportsman, the snowy-looking tents crowding round Vaux's tomb, and the animated ghauts of the Taptee river; and when, in the dark days and winter evenings, the happy member of a once social circle in these summer climes, shall amuse the loved

friends of his native land, with a retrospect of happy hours passed beneath an orient sky, then—

"Oft in response to the half suppressed sigh,
Warmly breathed o'er the tale of fair friendship's sweet love,
Sensibility's tribute from sympathy's eye,
Will steal to those few left on India's far shore."

END OF VOL. I.

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